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THE  
ART  
OF  
LIFE



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Diwakar Mishra  
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## THE ART OF LIFE



# THE ART OF LIFE

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## P R E F A C E

These essays are meant primarily for students of Indian Universities. Young people should be made aware of currents of contemporary thought and knowledge, and at the same time brought into contact with some of the best writers of modern English prose. That is what this book seeks to do.

The essay on "The Athens of Socrates and Plato" not only takes the reader to 'the glory that was Greece', but is also valuable as an example of early democracy at work. David Low's essay shows how a man, gifted with humour, looks at the present democratic form of government. Bertrand Russell tells us what shape democratic governments should take, if civilization is to survive. The importance of the contribution of Science, as well as its dangers, as depicted by Sir Richard Livingstone, is a subject to which the youth of today must give serious thought. J. C. Powys, an ardent lover of Nature, tells us what part Nature should play in our lives. The importance of discipline, leadership and co-operation in our lives is brought out by Lord Chatfield. In a distracted, troubled and divided world, "The Gandhian Way" comes as a breath of fresh air. Jawaharlal Nehru speaks of the need for Basic Wisdom in our approach to the complex problems of modern life.

Besides these, there are four essays more purely in the literary vein. With grace and lightness of touch, these deal with human conduct and behaviour. A. C. Benson speaks of Conversation as a fine art. Sir Max Beerbohm in his inimitable way reveals his wanderlust and his amiable vanity in showing off his much-labelled hat-box, which gives the *Odyssey* of his wanderings. In his delightfully whimsical manner Robert Lynd congratulates

writers who make funny mistakes, and thus, by their unconscious humour, add to the gaiety of nations. Somerset Maugham, on completing the Psalmist's three score years and ten, looks before and after, not pining for what is not, but with a cheerful sense of self-fulfilment.

All these essays are models of clarity and lucidity. Prose in the hands of Max Beerbohm, Robert Lynd, Somerset Maugham, A. C. Benson and Lowes Dickinson is modern English prose at its best. Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Livingstone write prose equally effective, simple and vivid.

This anthology, it is hoped, will appeal not only to the student but also to the general reader who will find in these essays much to interest him and to enlighten him on various aspects of the Art of Life.

This book bears the authority of  
Kamalakar Mishra, Vill.-Keotalia  
P.O.-Amarpur  
Distt.-Saran

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## I

## THE ART OF CONVERSATION

A. C. BENSON

Really good talk is one of the greatest pleasures there is, and yet how rarely one comes across it. There are a good many people among my acquaintance who on occasions are capable of talking well. But what they seem to lack is initiative, and deliberate purpose. If people would only look upon conversation in a more serious light, much would be gained. I do not of course mean, Heaven forbid, that people should try to converse seriously; that results in the worst kind of dreariness, in feeling, as Stevenson said, that one has the brain of a sheep and the eyes of a boiled codfish. But I mean that the more seriously one takes an amusement, the more amusing it becomes. What I wish is that people would apply the same sort of seriousness to talk that they apply to golf and bridge; that they should desire to improve their game, brood over their mistakes, ~~try~~ to do better. Why is it that so many people would think it priggish and effeminate to try to improve their talk, and yet think it manly and rational to try to shoot better? Of course it must be done with a natural zest and enjoyment, or it is useless. What a ghastly picture one gets of the old-fashioned talkers and wits, committing a number of subjects to memory, turning over a commonplace book for apposite anecdotes and jests, adding dates to those selected that they may not tell the same story again too soon, learning up a list of

epigrams, stuck in a shaving glass, when they are dressing for dinner, and then sallying forth primed to bursting with conversation! It is all very well to know beforehand the kind of line you would wish to take, but spontaneity is a necessary ingredient of talk, and to make up one's mind to get certain stories in, is to deprive talk of its fortuitous charm. When two celebrated talkers of the kind that I have described used to meet, the talk was nothing but a smart interchange of anecdotes. There is a story of Macaulay and some other great conversationalist getting into the swing at breakfast when staying, I think, with Lord Lansdowne. They drew their chairs to the fire, the rest of the company formed a circle round them, and listened meekly to the dialogue until luncheon. What an appalling picture! One sympathizes with Carlyle on the occasion when he was asked to dinner to meet a great talker, who poured forth a continuous flow of jest and anecdote until the meal was far advanced. Then came a lull; Carlyle laid down his knife and fork, and looking round with the famous "~~Crucified~~" expression on his face, said in a voice of agonized entreaty, "For God's sake take me away, and put me in a room by myself, and give me a pipe of tobacco." He felt, as I have felt on such occasions, an imperative need of silence and recollection and repose. Indeed, as he said on another occasion, of one of Coleridge's harangues, "to sit still and be pumped into is never an exhilarating process."

That species of talker is, however, practically extinct; though indeed I have met men whose idea of talk was a string of anecdotes, and who employed

the reluctant intervals of silence imposed upon them by the desperate attempt of fellow-guests to join in the fun, in arranging the points of their next anecdote.

What seems to me so odd about a talker of that kind is the lack of any sense of justice about his talk. He presumably enjoys the exercise of speech, and it seems to me strange that it should not occur to him that others may like it too, and that he should not concede a certain opportunity to others to have their say, if only in the interests of fair play. It is as though a gourmet's satisfaction in a good dinner were not complete unless he could prevent everyone else from partaking of the food before them.

What is really most needed in social gatherings is a kind of moderator of the talk, an informal president. Many people, as I have said, are quite capable of talking interestingly, if they get a lead. The perfect moderator should have a large stock of subjects of general interest. He should, so to speak, kick-off. And then he should either feel, or at least artfully simulate, an interest in other people's point of view. He should ask questions, reply to arguments, encourage, elicit expressions of opinion. He should not desire to steer his own course, but follow the line that the talk happens to take. If he aims at the reputation of being a good talker, he will win a far higher fame by pursuing this course; for it is a lamentable fact that, after a lively talk, one is apt to remember far better what one has oneself contributed to the discussion than what other people have said, and if you can send guests away from a gathering feeling that they have talked well, they will be dis-

posed in that genial mood to concede conversational merit to the other participants. A naive and simple-minded friend of my own once cast an extraordinary light on the subject, by saying to me, the day after an agreeable symposium at my own house, "We had a very pleasant evening with you yesterday. I was in great form."

The only two kinds of talker that I find tiresome are the talker of paradoxes and the egotist. A few paradoxes are all very well; they are stimulating and gently provocative. But one gets tired of a string of them; they become little more than a sort of fence erected round a man's mind; one despairs of ever knowing what a paradoxical talker really thinks. Half the charm of good talk consists in the glimpses and peeps one gets into the stuff of a man's thoughts; and it is wearisome to feel that a talker is for ever tossing subjects on his horns, perpetually trying to say the unexpected, the startling thing. In the best talk of all, a glade suddenly opens up, like the glades in the Alpine forests through which they bring the timber down to the valley; one sees a long green vista, all bathed in shimmering sunshine, with the dark head of a mountain at the top. So in the best talk one has a sudden sight of something high, sweet, serious, austere.

The other kind of talk that I find very disagreeable is the talk of a full-fledged egotist, who converses without reference to his hearers, and brings out what is in his mind. One gets interesting things in this way from time to time; but the essence, as I have said, of good talk is that one should have provoking and stimulating peeps into the other

minds, not that one should be compelled to gaze and stare into them. I have a friend, or rather an acquaintance, whose talk is just as if he opened a trap-door into his mind: you look into a dark place where something flows, stream or sewer; sometimes it runs clear and brisk, but at other times it seems to be charged with dirt and debris; and yet there is no escape; you have to stand and look, to breathe the very odours of the mind, until he chooses to close the door.

The mistake that many earnest and persevering talkers make is to suppose that to be engrossed is the same thing as being engrossing. It is true of conversation as of many other things, that the half is better than the whole. People who are fond of talking ought to beware of being lengthy. How one knows the despair of conversing with a man who is determined to make a clear and complete statement of everything, and not to let his hearer off anything. Arguments, questions, views, rise in the mind in the course of the harangue, and are swept away by the moving stream. Such talkers suffer from a complacent feeling that their information is correct and complete, and that their deductions are necessarily sound. But it is quite possible to form and hold a strong opinion, and yet to realise that it is after all only one point of view, and that there is probably much to be said on the other side. The unhappiest feature of drifting into a habit of positive and continuous talk is that one has few friends faithful enough to criticize such a habit and tell one the unvarnished truth; if the habit is once confirmed, it becomes almost impossible to break it

off. I know of a family conclave that was once summoned, in order, if possible, to communicate the fact to one of the circle that he was in danger of becoming a bore; the head of the family was finally deputed to convey the fact as delicately as possible to the erring brother. He did so, with much tender circumlocution. The offender was deeply mortified, but endeavoured to thank his elderly relative for discharging so painful a task. He promised amendment. He sat glum and tongue-tied for several weeks in the midst of cheerful gatherings. Very gradually the old habit prevailed. Within six months he was as tedious as ever; but what is the saddest part of the whole business is that he has never quite forgiven the teller of the unwelcome news, while at the same time he labours under the impression that he has cured himself of the habit.

It is, of course, useless to attempt to make oneself into a brilliant talker, because the qualities needed—humour, quickness, the power of seeing unexpected connections, picturesque phrasing, our natural charm, sympathy, readiness, ~~and so~~ forth—are things hardly attainable by effort. But much can be done by perseverance; and it is possible to form a deliberate habit of conversation by determining that however much one may be indisposed to talk, however unpromising one's companions may seem, one will at all events keep up one's end. I have known really shy and unready persons who from a sheer sense of duty have made themselves into very tolerable talkers. A friend of my acquaintance confesses that a device she has occasionally employed is to think of subjects in alpha-

betical order. I could not practise this device myself, because when I had lighted upon, we will say, algebra, archery, and astigmatism, as possible subjects for talk, I should find it impossible to invent any gambit by which they could be successfully introduced.

The only recipe which I would offer to a student of the art is not to be afraid of apparent egotism, but to talk frankly of any subject in which he may be interested, from a personal point of view. An impersonal talker is apt to be a dull dog. There is nothing like a frank expression of personal views to elicit an equally frank expression of divergence or agreement. Neither is it well to despise the day of small things; the weather, railway travelling, symptoms of illness, visits to a dentist, sea-sickness, as representing the universal experiences and interests of humanity, will often serve as *points d'appui*.

Of course there come to all people horrible tongue-tied moments when they can think of nothing to say, and feel like a walrus on an ice-floe, heavy, melancholy, ineffective. Such a catastrophe is almost invariably precipitated in my own case by being told that someone is particularly anxious to be introduced to me. A philosopher of my acquaintance, who was an admirable talker, told me that on a certain occasion, at an evening party, his hostess led up a young girl to him, like Iphigenia decked for the sacrifice, and said that Miss ... was desirous of meeting him. The world became instantly a blank to him. The enthusiastic damsel stared at him with large admiring eyes. After a period of agonised silence,

a remark occurred to him which he felt might have been appropriate if it had been made earlier in the encounter. He rejected it as useless, and after another interval a thought came to him which he saw might have served, if the suspense had not been already so prolonged; this was also put aside; and after a series of belated remarks had occurred to him, each of which seemed to be hopelessly unworthy of the expectation he had excited, the hostess, seeing that things had gone wrong, came, like Artemis, and led Iphigenia away, without the philosopher having had the opportunity of indulging in a single reflection. The experience, he said, was of so appalling a character, that he set to, and invented a remark which he said was applicable to persons of all ages and of either sex, under any circumstances whatever; but, as he would never reveal this precious possession to the most ardent inquirers, the secret, whatever it was, has perished with him.

One of my friends has a perfectly unique gift of conversation. He is a prominent man of affairs, a perfect mine of political secrets. He is a ready talker, and has the art, ~~in a tête-à-tête~~ as well as in a mixed company, of mentioning things which are extremely interesting, and appear to be hopelessly indiscreet. He generally accompanies his relation of these incidents with a request that the subject may not be mentioned outside. The result is that everyone who is brought into contact with him feels that he is selected by the great man because of some happy gift of temperament, trustworthiness, or discretion, or even on grounds of personal importance, to be the recipient of this signal mark of confidence. On one occasion I endeavoured,

after one of these conversations, not for the sake of betraying him, but in the interests of a diary which I keep, to formulate in precise and permanent terms some of this interesting intelligence. To my intense surprise and disappointment, I found myself entirely unable to recollect, much less to express, any of his statements. They had melted in the mind, like some delicate confection, and left behind them nothing but a faint aroma of interest and pleasure.

This would be a dangerous example to imitate, because it requires a very subtle species of art to select incidents and episodes which should both gratify the hearers, and which at the same time it should be impossible to hand on. Most people who attempted such a task would sink into being miserable blabbers of tacenda, mere sieves through which matters of secret importance would granulate into the hands of ardent journalists. But at once to stimulate and gratify curiosity, and to give a quiet circle the sense of being admitted to the inmost penetralia of affairs, is a triumph of conversational art.

Dr. Johnson used to say, that he loved to stretch his legs and have his talk out; and the fact remains that the best conversation one gets is the conversation that one does not scheme for, and even on occasions from which one has expected but little. The talks that remain in my mind as of pre-eminent interest are long leisurely *tête-à-tête* talks, oftenest perhaps of all in the course of a walk, when exercise sends the blood coursing through the brain, when a pleasant countryside tunes the spirit to a serene harmony of mood, and when the mind, stimulated into a joyful readiness by

association with some quiet, just, and perceptive companion, visits its dainty warehouse, and turns over its fantastic stores. Then is the time to penetrate into the inmost labyrinths of a subject, to indulge in pleasing discursiveness, as the fancy leads one, and yet to return again and again with renewed relish to the central theme. Such talks as these, with no overshadowing anxiety upon the mind, held on breezy uplands or in pleasant country lanes, make the moments, indeed, to which the mind, in the sad mood which remembers the days that are gone, turns with that sorrowful desolation of which Dante speaks, as to a treasure lightly spent and ungratefully regarded. How such hours rise up before the mind! Even now as I write I think of such a scene, when I walked with a friend, long dead, on the broad yellow sands beside a western sea. I can recall the sharp hiss of the shoreward wind, the wholesome savours of the brine, the soft clap of small waves, the sand-dunes behind the shore, pricked with green tufts of grass, the ships moving slowly on the sea's rim, and the shadowy headland to which we hardly seemed to draw more near, while we spoke of all that was in our hearts, and all that we meant to do and be. That day was a great gift from God; and yet, as I received it, I did not know how fair a jewel of memory it would be. I like to think that there are many such jewels of recollection clasped close in the heart's casket, even in the minds of men and women that I meet, that seem so commonplace to me, so interesting to themselves!

It is strange, in reflecting about the memorable talks I have held with different people, to find that I

remember best the talks that I have had with men, rather than with women. There is a kind of simple openness, an equal comradeship in talks with men which I find it difficult to attain in the case of women. I suppose that some unsuspected mystery of sex creeps in, and that with women there is a whole range of experiences and emotions that one does not share, so that there is an invisible and intangible barrier erected between the two minds. I feel, too, in talking with women, that I am met with almost too much sympathy and tact, so that one falls into an egotistical mood. It is difficult, too, I find, to be as frank in talking with women as with men; because I think that women tend more than men to hold a preconceived idea of one's character and tastes; and it is difficult to talk simply and naturally to any one who has formed a mental picture of one, especially if one is aware that it is not correct. But men are slower to form impressions, and thus talk is more experimental; moreover, in talking with men, one encounters more opposition, and opposition puts one more on one's mettle.

Thus a *tête-à-tête* with a man of similar tastes, who is just and yet sympathetic, critical yet appreciative, whose point of view just differs enough to make it possible for him to throw sidelights on a subject, and to illumine aspects of it that were unperceived and neglected—this is a high intellectual pleasure, a potion to be delicately sipped at leisure.

But after all it is impossible to say what makes a conversationalist. There are people who seem to possess every qualification for conversing except the power to converse. The two absolutely essential

things are, in the first place, a certain charm of mind and even manner, which is a purely instinctive gift; and, in the second place, real sympathy with real interest in the deuteragonist.

People can be useful talkers, even interesting talkers, without these gifts. One may like to hear what a man of vigorous mind may have to say on a subject that he knows well, even if he is unsympathetic. But then one listens in a receptive frame of mind, as though one were prepared to attend a lecture. There are plenty of useful talkers at a University, men whom it is a pleasure to meet occasionally, men with whom one tries, so to speak, a variety of conversational flies, and who will give one fine sport when they are fairly hooked. But though a University is a place where one ought to expect to find abundance of the best talk, the want of leisure among the present generation of Dons is a serious bar to interesting talk. By the evening the majority of Dons are apt to be tired. They have been hard at work most of the day, and they look upon the sociable evening hours as a time to be given up to what the Scotch call "daffing"; that is to say, a sort of nimble interchange of humorous or interesting gossip; a man who pursues a subject intently is apt to be thought a bore. I think that the middle-aged Don is apt to be less interesting than either the elderly or the youthful Don. The middle-aged Don is, like all successful professional men, full to the brim of affairs. He has little time for general reading. He lectures, he attends meetings, his table is covered with papers, and his leisure hours are full of interviews. But the younger Don is generally less occupied and more enthusiastic;

and best of all is the elderly Don, who is beginning to take things more easily, has a knowledge of men, a philosophy and a good-humoured tolerance which makes him more accessible. He is not in a hurry, he is not preoccupied. He studies the daily papers with deliberation; and he has just enough duties to make him feel wholesomely busy. His ambitions are things of the past, and he is gratified by attention and deference.

I suppose the same is the case, in a certain degree, all the world over. But the truth about conversation is that, to make anything of it, people must realize it as a definite mental occupation and not merely a dribbling into words of casual thoughts. To do it well implies a certain deliberate intention, a certain unselfishness, a certain zest. The difficulty is that it demands a catholicity of interests, a full mind. Yet it does not do to have a subject on the brain, and to introduce it into all companies. The pity is that conversation is not more recognized as a definite accomplishment. People who care about the success of social gatherings are apt to invite an instrumentalist or a singer, or a man with what may be called parlour tricks; but few people are equally careful to plant out two or three conversationalists among their parties, or to take care that their conversationalists are provided with a sympathetic background.

For the fact remains that conversation is a real art, and depends, like all other arts, upon congenial circumstances and suitable surroundings. People are too apt to believe that, because they have interests in their minds and can put those interests into words, they are equipped for the pretty and delicate game of talk. But

a rare admixture of qualities is needed for a subtle conversational effect; a sudden fancy, that throws a charming or a bizarre light on a subject, a power of pleasing metaphorical expression, the communication of an imaginative interest to a familiar topic—all these things are of the nature of instinctive art. I have heard well-informed and sensible people talk of a subject in a way that made me feel that I desired never to hear it mentioned again; but I have heard, on the other hand, people talk of matters which I had believed to be worn threadbare by use, and yet communicate a rich colour, a fragrant sentiment to them, which made me feel that I had never thought adequately on the topic before. One should be careful, I think, to express to such persons one's appreciation and admiration of their gifts, for the art is so rare that we ought to welcome it when we find it; and, like all arts, it depends to a great extent for its sustenance on the avowed gratitude of those who enjoy it. It is on these subtle half-toned glimpses of personality and difference that most of our happy impressions of life depend; and no one can afford wilfully to neglect sources of innocent joy, or to lose opportunities of pleasure through a stupid or brutal contempt for the slender resources out of which these gentle effects are produced.

## II

## THE ATHENS OF SOCRATES AND PLATO

G. LOWES DICKINSON

The Platonic dialogues cannot be properly understood unless we remember the setting in which they were framed. They were a natural product of ancient Athens, where were collected, in what seems to us a very small city, a crowd of the most active-minded people that has ever been gathered together, except perhaps in the Florence of the Renaissance. Everybody of any note was known, at any rate by sight and reputation, to everybody else. Life was lived, as it is still in the South, much more out-of-doors than indoors. The boys and men of the well-to-do classes spent much of their time in the gymnasium, which was a centre of conversation as well as of athletics. There was of course no printing, and though books were written and handed about, most teaching was oral, whether for boys or grown-up men. Word of mouth in public, not book-reading in private, was the medium of intellectual culture.

At the same time this little city was a centre of intense political life. For Athens, like the other Greek cities, was a sovereign independent state, governing itself, contracting alliances, and waging war. Thus all the main problems of political science arose there both in practice and theory, though on what seems to us a miniature scale; and Greek political speculation, arising out of Greek experience, gave the general form to all later political thinking, however much

the scale may have been enlarged and the details varied in the two thousand years of history that have elapsed since Plato's date. The history of ancient Greece is indeed, in certain respects, an epitome of the history of Europe; and since it was discussed and debated by perhaps the most brilliant set of people that have ever been brought together, its reflection in thought has never ceased to fascinate those who have been intelligent and cultivated enough to understand it.

But if the history of ancient Greece was small in scale, it was also brief in time. Its origins, of course, extend indefinitely into the past, but its time of flourishing was only about two hundred years, say from the middle of the sixth century B.C. to the middle of the fourth. After that, Greece was absorbed politically, first into the Macedonian, then into the Roman State. Athens then assumed a position like that of Oxford in England, or Paris in France, or Weimar in Germany. We now are only concerned with the latter half of the fifth and the earlier half of the fourth century B.C. For Plato's date is 427-347; and his master, Socrates, was born some forty years earlier.

Plato's boyhood and youth were thus passed in the stress of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.), in which all the cities of Greece took part and which ended in the crushing defeat of Athens. He belonged to an aristocratic and political family and would naturally have adopted a political career. Perhaps the mere defeat of Athens would not have altered his mind, but he had witnessed in 399 B.C. the imprisonment of his master and his condemnation to death. The injustice of this drove him from Athens. He spent some years

travelling abroad, and when he did venture into practical politics it was not in Athens, but in Sicily. At Athens his career was that of a teacher, but among the things he taught, politics took a conspicuous place. To appreciate what he has to say on this theme we must remind ourselves of what politics meant in Athens.

Athens, it has been said, was governed by public meeting; and though this statement over-simplifies the matter, it serves to throw into relief the difference between a city democracy and the democracies of our own time. Actually, in Athens, a public meeting which all citizens could attend did transact all the most important political business and take the most important decisions, particularly those of peace and war. The meeting on great occasions would be crowded, and to be influential there a statesman must be able to hold it by oratory. On the character of the leaders who could control the assembly the city would stand or fall. The speeches of some of these statesmen-orators have been preserved verbally or in essentials. One of the greatest of them was Pericles, and in his famous speech about Athens, reported by the historian Thucydides, we see how a patriotic Athenian judged the character and achievement of Athens:

"Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbours, but are an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few. But while the law secures equal justice to all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized, and when a citizen is in any way distinguished,

he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as reward of merit. Neither is poverty a bar, but a man may benefit his country whatever be the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private intercourse we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbour, if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private intercourse, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrongs by respect for authority and for the laws, having an especial regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured as well as to those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor of them the reprobation of the general sentiment.

"And we have not forgotten to provide for our weary spirits many relaxations from toil; we have regular games and sacrifices throughout the year; at home the style of our life is refined; and the delight which we daily feel in all these things helps to banish melancholy. Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us; so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as of our own.

"Then, again, our military training is in many respects superior to that of our adversaries. Our city is thrown open to the world, and we never expel a foreigner or prevent him from seeing or learning anything of which the secret, if revealed to an enemy, might profit him. We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our hearts and hands. And in the matter of education,

whereas they from early youth are always undergoing laborious exercises which are to make them brave, we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face the perils which they face. And here is the proof. The Lacedaemonians come into Attica not by themselves, but with their whole confederacy following; we go alone into a neighbour's country; and although our opponents are fighting for their homes and we on a foreign soil, we have seldom any difficulty in overcoming them. Our enemies have never yet felt our united strength; the care of a navy divides our attention, and on land we are obliged to send our own citizens everywhere. But they, if they meet and defeat a part of our army, are as proud as if they had routed us all, and when defeated they pretend to have been vanquished by us all.

"If, then, we prefer to meet danger with a light heart but without laborious training, and with a courage which is gained by habit and not enforced by law, are we not greatly the gainers? Since we do not anticipate the pain, although, when the hour comes, we can be as brave as those who never allow themselves to rest; and thus, too, our city is equally admirable in peace and in war. For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the State because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We

alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless, but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance, but hesitate upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger. In doing good, again, we are unlike others; we make our friends by conferring, not by receiving favours. Now he who confers a favour is the firmer friend, because he would fain by kindness keep alive the memory of an obligation; but the recipient is colder in his feelings, because he knows that in requiting another's generosity he will not be winning gratitude, but only paying a debt. We alone do good to our neighbours not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit.

"To sum up, I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the State. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which

he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages: We shall not need the praises of Homer or of any other panegyrist, whose poetry may please for the moment, although his representation of the facts will not bear the light of day. For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valour, and have everywhere planted eternal memorials of our friendship and of our enmity."

This passage is a superb example of the way in which a leader in war may encourage his fellow-citizens to fight. Two years later the Athenians, with their territory invaded and their citizens crowded into a city decimated by famine and plague, were crying for peace and turning against Pericles as the author of all their sufferings. Nor was that all. The war between the sovereign city states gave birth to civil war between the factions within; and it is thus that, five years after the beginning of the war, we find Thucydides describing the condition of Greece:

"Not long afterwards the whole Hellenic world was in commotion; in every city the chiefs of the democracy and of the oligarchy were struggling, the one to bring in the Athenians, the other the Lacedaemonians. Now in time of peace, men would have had no excuse for introducing either, and no desire to do so, but when they were at war and both sides could easily obtain allies to the hurt of their enemies and the advantage of themselves, the dissatisfied party were only too ready to in-

voke foreign aid. And revolution brought upon the cities of Hellas many terrible calamities, such as have been and always will be while human nature remains the same, but which are more or less aggravated and differ in character with every new combination of circumstances. In peace and prosperity both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives, because they do not fall under the dominion of imperious necessities; but war which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life is a hard master, and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions.

"When troubles had once begun in the cities, those who followed carried the revolutionary spirit further and further, and determined to outdo the report of all who had preceded them by the ingenuity of their enterprises and the atrocity of their revenges. The meaning of words had no longer the same relation to things, but was changed by them as they thought proper. Reckless daring was held to be loyal courage; prudent delay was the excuse of a coward; moderation was the disguise of unmanly weakness; to know everything was to do nothing. Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. A conspirator who wanted to be safe was a recreant in disguise. The lover of violence was always trusted, and his opponent suspected. He who succeeded in a plot was deemed knowing, but a still greater master in craft was he who detected one. On the other hand, he who plotted from the first to have nothing to do with plots was a breaker up of parties and a poltroon who was afraid of the enemy. In a word, he who could outstrip another in a bad action was applauded, and so was he who en-

couraged to evil one who had no idea of it. The tie of party was stronger than the tie of blood, because a partisan was more ready to dare without asking why. For party associations are not based upon any established law, nor do they seek the public good; they are formed in defiance of the laws and from self-interest. The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. If an enemy when he was in the ascendent offered fair words, the opposite party received them not in a generous spirit, but by a jealous watchfulness of his actions. Revenge was dearer than self-preservation. Any agreements sworn to by either party, when they could do nothing else, were binding as long as both were powerless. But he who on a favourable opportunity first took courage and struck at his enemy when he saw him off his guard, had greater pleasure in a perfidious than he would have had in an open act of revenge; he congratulated himself that he had taken the safer course, and also that he had over-reached his enemy and gained the prize of superior ability. In general, the dishonest more easily gain credit for cleverness than the simple for goodness; men take a pride in the one, but are ashamed of the other.

"The cause of all these evils was the love of power, originating in avarice and ambition, and the party-spirit which is engendered by them when men are fairly embarked in a contest. For the leaders on either side used specious names, the one party professing to uphold the constitutional equality of the many, the other the wisdom of an aristocracy, while they made the public interests, to which in name they

were devoted, in reality their prize. Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most monstrous crimes; yet even these were surpassed by the magnitude of their revenges which they pursued to the very utmost, neither party observing any definite limits either of justice or public expediency, but both alike making the caprice of the moment their law. Either by the help of an unrighteous sentence, or grasping power with the strong hand, they were eager to satiate the impatience of party-spirit. Neither faction cared for religion; but any fair pretence which succeeded in effecting some odious purpose was greatly lauded. And the citizens who were of neither party fell a prey to both, either they were disliked because they held aloof, or men were jealous of their surviving.

"Thus revolution gave birth to every form of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble nature was laughed to scorn and disappeared. An attitude of perfidious antagonism everywhere prevailed, for there was no word binding enough nor oath terrible enough to reconcile enemies. Each man was strong only in the conviction that nothing was secure; he must look to his own safety, and could not afford to trust others. Inferior intellects generally succeeded best. For, aware of their own deficiencies, and fearing the capacity of their opponents, for whom they were no match in powers of speech, and whose subtle wits were likely to anticipate them in contriving evil, they struck boldly and at once. But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time, and disdaining to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed."

Such was the city in which Socrates and Plato lived and died, and such the circumstances in which the one passed his prime and the other his youth.

### III

#### I BELIEVE

SIR DAVID LOW

"There's a lot of anti-American feeling here," said a friend of mine from New York. "Bosh," I said, "you are like the roysterer on the murky night who ran into a tree and felt around and around it wailing that he was lost in an impenetrable forest. I don't find any of this anti-American feeling you talk about. Only an occasional chump. True, there is plenty of criticism of American policy. Ever since our British affairs got mixed up with yours and our lives and deaths became affected by what you do in America (and *vice versa*, let me point out), we fight your political issues as though they were our own, which after all they ARE. If your fish-eyed idealists who want to keep America all to themselves expect us to remain corked up when your, or, in effect, OUR Government in Washington, seems to be doing the wrong thing, the realities are against them. Could explorers be expected to take no interest in the chap who carries the lunch basket? Or seafarers in the custodian of the lifebelts? No, Sir. Far from it."

There is nothing anti-American about that. Quite the contrary. The truth is Fate has made us British all honorary Americans. Sometimes, indeed, it seems unfair, that we don't have votes at U. S. elections, but I suppose that would hardly be practicable yet. No doubt it will come. And when it does, I hope to offer myself as a candidate for the Atlantic (*née*

United States) Senate, and I wish to state that no Fifth Amendment will prevent me from stating my credo, be it self-incriminating or no. In fact, to be on the safe side, I shall do so here and now.

Fellow Citizens! Taking first principles first, I AM FOR DEMOCRACY, which I define as the Community of Informed and Responsible Citizens (CIRC to you). I am for Representative Government, that is, government by representatives, not by leaders, freely chosen by and acting in accordance with the sovereign will of the aforesaid Citizens. So far we have neither, but am I depressed? No. When ideals are realized, they cease to be ideals and idealists like me have to go out of business.

Some spadework will be needed before CIRC is achieved. We may be all born equal, but it becomes more and more obvious that when the votes of a lazy bonehead who takes no interest in his country and of a diligent sage who does, count as equal, we have a weakness. In my CIRC, the anachronism would have to be cured before it cured itself crudely by discrimination.

I believe that ignorance is the enemy of Democracy. Therefore Education in current affairs is the most urgent public need so that Citizens may be informed and grow responsible. I am for using all persuasion and pressure short of fracturing his skull to make the Citizen learn about the matters concerning his life and death. While my CIRC is in the making I have to settle for something less—say 10 per cent of the voters knowing what they are voting about, as against a computation of the minimum 3 per cent

upon which the present system can function. I want things to be better than they were during World War II when perhaps one person in a hundred was able to compare the essential principles of Nazism or Fascism with those of Democracy and explain his preference. I do not know how many Citizens today, when Democracy is said to be locked in an ideological grapple with Communism, would be able intelligently to tell the difference. Precious few, I fear, (probably not even Senator McCarthy, who would have to begin by stating that the most important difference is that under Democracy the Citizen can hold what opinions he likes without prejudice). This is not good enough. It may be a fatal weakness today not to know our own case.

The popular press and radio ought to be the efficient means for the distribution of information, but unfortunately they are not. As it works out (allowing for honourable exceptions) the competition for big circulation within these "industries" just naturally tends towards their providing quite a different service, entertainment rather than information, titivation rather than education. Therefore, I am for improvements. I will not need state control, but on the other hand neither will I need mistaken persons who think that the function most vital to Democracy is best left in the hands of private individuals responsible to nothing but their own dubious consciences, which are notoriously influenced by the state of their cash-boxes. I would seek a compromise between public and private interest with adequate safeguards at both ends. As a start, I should make it obligatory for

journals wishing to describe themselves as "newspapers" to print news.

Again, although I believe in Party Government as a necessary expedient until and perhaps after CIRC is realized, it would not be enough for the citizen to belong to a political Party and leave his thinking to professional politicians. The democratic process is not adequately fulfilled by stampeding the citizen up to the voting booth with such alternative policies as have been offered monstrously distorted for him according to Party interests until they seem either divinely inspired or hellish. Nor by cajoling him with bluffs, chicanery and false sentimentality to vote for Eisenhower, or Churchill or Who-have-you, not necessarily because any of these heroes has sensible ideas about current political issues but because he has won the war, because he is good to his family, or (most frequently) because he was appointed leader by the boys of his Party smartest at horse-trading. I have no lack of admiration for Eisenhower or Churchill, but those citizens who hand out their votes as tributes to Great Personalities make a fool of Democracy. Responsible citizens reserve their political loyalties neither for Parties nor heroes, but for beliefs.

What beliefs? I suggest that the first aims of statesmanship should be:—

- (a) to prevent people from biting one another;
- (b) to give their souls a chance to grow;
- (c) to make it possible for them to get the necessities of life.

Taking (b) and (c) first...I AM FOR LIBERTY. Individually men need freedom to find each the

best that is in him. Collectively the free association of free men is the best defence against tyranny. One freedom, particularly, is essential to the working of Democracy—freedom of expression. With freedom of expression, Democracy lives. Without it, Democracy dies. I would encourage freedom to say, write or sing what one likes, restricted only by fair laws of libel, scandal or obscenity. But liberty of action is a relative thing, its application changing with circumstances. You can't give people liberty to drive on the wrong side of the road, as they once did. You can't let citizens set up their private police forces, establish glue-factories in Rockefeller Plaza or even walk naked up and down Broadway. I am for as much liberty as is compatible with order. No liberty to curb other people's liberty, no liberty for the strong to impose their will on the weak; nor even for large majorities to sit on little minorities without due consideration. I should improve the machinery of our Government by creating a Department of Exceptions to consider cases in which strict observance of the letter of the law defeats its spirit and individuals legally suffer manifest injustice. I should expect it to work twenty-four hours a day.

Regarding (c), I AM FOR PLENTY. It seems to me that situations are developing in human affairs which will call for drastic adjustment in ways of life. I believe that the wider distribution of wealth is reducing the justification of poverty for worker-employer frictions; and the discontents of the worker become more emotional than economic. Consequently, I am for adding dignity and privilege to Labour by establishing

a Chamber of Work in which would sit representatives of Labour, management and consumers, to balance wages, prices, hours and output, according not merely to conditions in single industries separately but to those in the whole industrial structure. Members of the Chamber could wear ermine and plush robes, if they liked. Poor chaps, they would have their hands full dealing with the tumultuous problems likely to crop up in the next fifty years. The competition in ingenuity to devise new forms of energy and mechanical power shows no signs of flagging. I am far from convinced that a point will not be reached at which the demand for unskilled labour diminishes and the bottom falls out of the wages system. I should use the Chamber of Work to stave off crises before they happen. It would, I intend, be there with a nice soft cushion to catch daredevil Directors as they try to break their necks on their collapsible cycle of no jobs, no wages—no wages, no customers—no customers, no business.

I would employ every useful aid to smooth adjustment, including measures of both Public and Private Enterprise. I would get on with the public organization of the sources of power, transport and the supply of raw materials, so that people could get on with their private enterprise without hesitations and delays. I would oppose restrictive practices in industry, or 'making useless jobs just to keep alive a wages system grown obsolete. My positive long-term aims would be to reduce dull routine work to a minimum; and to produce by automatic means as soon as possible an adequate flow of the essential needs of life for distribution free to citizens. After that,

having made possible for millions private enterprise in designing improvements in the standard of living, I should marshal active spirits for a new and inspiring era of improvements to the world; the damming of the Mediterranean and diversion of tide-waters into Sahara to make the desert blossom; the construction of a range of mountains in Central Australia to trap rain; the harnessing for domestic use of the world's internal heat; the development of Polar resources; and, of course, interplanetary communications and colonisation.

Concerning point (a), I AM FOR PEACE. My policy would be pacific, but not pacifist. No barest suggestion for a Peace Congress would find me unwilling to turn it into an opportunity to bawl my yearning for peace at the top of my voice. But because spiritual and material standards have to be protected from marauders, I must have efficient police and defence forces. I whisper in your ear, citizens, that I should expect them to be more for diplomatic show than for use. Force is the bankruptcy of ideas. Away with those stupid fellows who are short of ideas and whose only remedy for what they don't like is violence. Make way for the clever guys. War is usually avoidable with patience and cunning. Bring on your Machiavellis, I say, when peace is at stake. Questions of peace or war are not decided on battlefields, but in offices; not by brave warriors locked in mortal combat, but by little chaps with high foreheads, calculating how to top the opponent's resources at a given point. Give me efficient spies and agents to help frustrate hostility. If, say, Russians make faces at me, I want to know all about them as a

measure of security. Give me lots of ex-Russians who know the ropes. I should have Marx and Engels dissected and exploded in our schools. We will not win ideological wars by ignoring the opponent's weapon. The way to defeat Communism is not to suppress Communist opinion, but to answer it.

Two hot and one cold world wars have not made a bit of difference to the pressure of need towards a world order. But no organization will please me that does not strictly preserve local cultures. None of those worlds in which everybody everywhere wears the same clothes and hats, thank you. While we are waiting for the United Nations and kindred ideas to grow into something real, I do not object to "spheres of influence." But no distorted and unnatural influence imposed with a club. No imposition of one people's ways on another. Let East be East and West, West, each striving by persuasion and good example to mitigate inhumanity and cruelty in the other.

My best insurance against war would be my astute foreign policy. My appeal would be to self-interest. I should have, say, Hong Kong going day and night, imposing trade on China, pumping consumer goods over the frontier with the purpose of creating bonds and ties, nullifying propaganda, eroding prejudice, weakening discipline and advertising the superiority of my way of life. My foreign aim would be not to bring down objectionable governments but to cause them to change their policies. I deplore the bull-headed school of statesmanship which makes a virtue of not thinking beyond the musical crash of Communist Russia and Communist China collapsing

in ruins, because I have no confidence that after such a crash Kerensky and Chiang Kai-shek could impose new Democratic Order in either place. They were not able to do that before in much more favourable circumstances. I should think it extremely perilous for the world to walk out leaving the ruins to competing war-lords who might finish by creating something which would make Stalinism look like a Sunday outing. On the other hand, I could not ask the Americans to double their taxation and send supplies and men to keep order for, say, twenty years in two such vast areas while civilisation was being repaired, on the lines followed in Germany with doubtful success.

In short, I am a careful optimist. I like the philosopher whose advice was to keep one eye on the road, one on the horizon and one on the stars.

## IV

### WORLD GOVERNMENT ✓ BERTRAND RUSSELL

World Government is at the present time no more than a Utopian ideal. Some people imagined that the U. N. Organization was going to be a kind of world government; but, to anybody who understands the meaning of the word "government", it was obvious from the first that the U. N. did not qualify.

The essence of a government is that it should have some coercive power over those who resist its authority. Of this the U. N. was deprived by the veto, except indeed in cases where no world government was necessary. The U. N. could prevent an unprovoked attack of Finland upon Russia but not of Russia upon Finland.

The quite exceptional case of the action of the U. N. in Korea was only made possible by the fact that Russia had briefly retired to sulk in isolation. Something very much more drastic than the U. N. will be necessary if a genuine world government is ever to come into existence.

Why, you may ask, should we trouble our heads now about something which certainly cannot be achieved until the world situation has been radically changed? The reason is that nothing short of such a radical change will give security against world war.

I am not thinking at the moment only, or chiefly, of world war in the near future as a result of present tension. I am thinking of world war as a grim possi-

bility overshadowing our future and making existence hectic and precarious. This or that international disagreement may be overcome by negotiation, but sooner or later, if nothing radical is done in the way of creating an international government, some state will be sufficiently reckless and sufficiently exasperated to risk a war.

Let us take an analogy; suppose you had a large dump of high explosives open to the public and constantly traversed by persons with lighted cigarettes. You might put up notices warning them that instant death would be the penalty for dropping a lighted cigarette, and no doubt such notices would be effective for a time, but sooner or later some careless person would forget, and disaster would ensue. This is exactly the state of the world while it contains hydrogen bombs and preserves unrestricted national sovereignty.

Another world war can bring nothing but disaster to all the belligerents; there is no hope of anything deserving to be called victory for anybody. All governments know that this is the case. Even Malenkov has stated it emphatically; but I think there is undue optimism in supposing that this knowledge affords secure protection against war.

As Mr. Attlee has pointed out in a broadcast on the hydrogen bomb, Hitler in his last days would almost certainly have been willing to destroy the human race rather than surrender, and he would have been able to do so if his tame physicists had been a little cleverer. I do not suggest that the Soviet Government is in this respect comparable to Hitler, for Hitler was mad and the rulers of the Communist world have shown no signs of being so.

But we cannot rely indefinitely upon the sanity of governments. There have been madmen in power in the past, who did as much harm as they could. There may be madmen in power in the future; and, if there are, they will be able to do immeasurably more harm than has been done by madmen hitherto.

I do not think that the continued existence of the human race will be secure until large scale wars have become impossible. And I do not think there is any way of making them impossible except by a world government.

The powers of the world government, should of course, be limited to such as are necessary for the prevention of war. In all other respects, the independence of national states should be unimpaired. I think it would be found desirable that the units composing the world federation should themselves be large federations, such as the Western Hemisphere, the Commonwealth, and the Communist world. What is important is that the world federation should have a monopoly of armed force, except for such minor weapons as might be necessary for police action.

If the international armed force is to be efficiently safeguarded against the danger of nationalistic mutiny, it will be necessary that each unit of the international force shall be mixed in composition, containing, for example, Americans, Western Europeans, Russians, Chinese and Indians. If this is not done, there will always be a risk of civil war.

Apart from a monopoly of armed force, what further powers would the world government need in order to safeguard the peace of the world? The first and most

obvious is the control of treaties. No treaty between national states or federations of states should be valid unless sanctioned by the international authority, which should, moreover, have power to insist upon the revision of treaties that a lapse of time had made unduly onerous to either party.

In the event of a dispute between national states or between federations the international government should automatically take cognizance of the dispute and should pronounce a decision by arbitration. If either party resisted the decision, the international government should impose its authority by whatever show of force might be necessary.

Delicate questions may arise as regards population. At present, some Japanese consider that they ought to be permitted to dump millions of their surplus population in Papua. But no Australian will agree with this opinion. At present, some parts of the world are over-populated, while others are not.

The over-populated regions may be inclined to demand the right of emigration into the less-populated regions. But I do not think that the international government ought to interfere with the right of national states to make their own immigration laws. If it attempted to do so, it would arouse such fierce opposition that it would become unable to perform its function as a preserver of peace.

I think the international government ought to have some say in the allocation of raw materials. I do not think that unrestricted private property in raw materials is justified, even when the private owner is a state.

If the international authority is to be secure against the surreptitious manufacture of atomic or hydrogen bombs by single nations or alliances of nations, there will be need of the kind of safeguards that were to be provided in the Baruch Plan. That is to say, it will be necessary that all mining of fissionable material should be the monopoly of the international authority.

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It would have to have such powers of inspection as would enable it to know at an early stage if this monopoly was being infringed, and it would have to use all its power to punish such infraction if it occurred. Such measures might suffice for the near future, but scientific ingenuity in inventing methods of death will, I fear, not end with the invention of the hydrogen bomb.

Bacteriological warfare is capable of a great and terrible future, and will be much more difficult to control by inspection than warfare depending upon hydrogen bombs. For such reasons, we must expect that the international government once established, will have to widen the sphere of its activities to meet new emergencies. This almost always happens with federal governments. The Federal Government of the United States has gradually widened its scope in a manner which would have horrified its founders.

I think, however, that there will be a limit to this process owing to a general change in the sentiments of mankind. When the world has grown used to secure peace, the notion of using private war as an instrument of policy will gradually become abhorrent, except to small and uninfluential minorities, and the invention of ways to destroy the human race will no longer win public approbation.

I do not venture to prophesy that a world government such as I have been contemplating will, in fact, be created. What I do say, and what I wish to say with all possible emphasis is that the creation of such a government is the only long-term alternative to the extinction of the human race. It may be that men's anarchic passions are so strong as to lead them to prefer extinction to international control. I hope not, but I cannot feel wholly confident.

I will not deny that the loss of liberty involved may be painful. In the Middle Ages, barons enjoyed a freedom of which they were gradually deprived by kings. The Wars of the Roses in England and the Civil Wars of the sixteenth century in France persuaded the English and French each to submit to a central authority which was abhorrent to the feudal nobility. The same sort of process now needs to be carried into the international sphere.

As the world becomes more crowded and more scientific, there is more and more need of restraining initiative by law, whether the initiative be that of private individuals or that of adventurous states. I do not deny that this involves the loss of some things which it is pleasant to read about. There is pleasure in contemplating the exploits of Alexander the Great or Sir Francis Drake, but in the crowded modern world anything at all analogous to such exploits does such immeasurable harm as to have become incompatible with everything else that we value.

Individual initiative, which is immensely to be prized, need not cease because it is prevented from taking destructive forms. The creative forms of

individual enterprise in science and art and literature, in the technique of production, and in social organization will all be able to flourish far more fully than at present in a world freed from the menace of total war.

The freedom of undisciplined children may, to them, seem delightful but is not possible for grown-up people. Human society, as it emerges from childhood, must likewise put away childish things. It will not have done so until it submits to an international authority which will make total war no longer possible.

## V

## IN PRAISE OF MISTAKES

ROBERT LYND

There has been a heavy shower of letters in *The Times* about the mistakes made by famous novelists. Correspondents have written to the Editor pointing out such things as that Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith blundered in making one of her characters 'send his son to school from Kent to Shrewsbury in the early eighteenth century; that Walter Besant erred in making the hero of one of his stories dig for oil with a spade and dig triumphantly; that William Le Queux was guilty of a geographical lie in referring to the 'snow-crowned crest' of a hill two thousand feet high in the tropics; that some other novelist erroneously described the daughter of a rural dean as having 'been brought up in the quiet seclusion of the Deanery'; that a writer of detective stories misrepresented 'the relative position of a Chief Constable and an inspector of the C. I. D.', and so on, and so on. The correspondence was extremely interesting, but, as one read it, one became more and more astonished at the weakness of the case made out against the novelists by the intelligentsia of the nation. Even the most pugnacious lawyer, if so poor a case had been put into his hands, would have advised his client not to bring it into court. At the end of the indictment the novelist might triumphantly have replied to his accusers in the words of Lord Clive: 'By God, Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation.'

For if this is the worst that can be said against novelists they must be wizards of accuracy compared with such professed dealers in facts as biographers and historians.

I confess I am myself so nervous a lover of accuracy that, when I have written an article, I consult the encyclopaedia to make sure that I have not erred on some such matter as the sun's rising in the East or the Pole Star's not being one of the planets. Often, awaking out of a dream in the small hours, I have broken into a sweat of fear lest, in an article that had already gone to press, I had put some wretched poet that nobody ever reads into the wrong century...

There are a great many words that mean nothing to the ordinary reader and that yet everybody reads with pleasure—words that we love not for their sense but for their appeal to our senses. Who ever cares whether a poet is accurate or not when he uses the word 'chrysoprase' or 'beryl' or 'sardonyx' or 'chalcedony'? Yet who that has ever been young has not admired these words though they conveyed nothing except a blur of beauty to his intelligence? The most incompetent jeweller's assistant in the world could probably correct a thousand errors in the poets in their references to precious stones, just as the Editor of the *Tailor and Cutter* once a year exposes the errors of Mr. Augustus John, Sir William Orpen and the most eminent painters of our time in the gents' suiting with which they clothe their sitters. But the poet, with all his mistakes, is telling us something that the jeweller's assistant with all his accuracy cannot tell us. As one grows older, no doubt, one cares less for the rarer kind of jewellery in poetry. Still, so long as one likes the sound

of 'chrysoberyl', one does not really care whether a poet who uses the word knows what a chrysoberyl is or is not.

The truth is, the only fatal error in a writer is to be uninteresting. Even the historian will be forgiven all other errors but that. The inaccuracies of Froude have been laughed at for three generations, but we can still read him more easily than we can read most of the historians who have corrected him. I do not wish to suggest that a writer need be at no pains to verify his facts. That would obviously be a vile doctrine, and, if it were acted upon, would make the writing of history a frivolous pursuit. At the same time, we instinctively concede to every writer a margin of error, and we no more expect him to be perfect in his information than in his character. There have been few writers who have not perpetrated errors that had to be amended by their editors. Shakespeare blundered in chronology and geography, Scott made the sun rise on the wrong side of the world. Lamb and Hazlitt continually misquoted the poets they loved. Was there not a famous novelist who, in describing a University boat-race, wrote of the stroke of one of the boats: 'All rowed fast, but none rowed so fast as he'? Only a few years ago an able woman novelist gave us a picture of an Association football match in which one of the characters picked up the ball and scored a try. I doubt, however, if she lost a single reader in consequence. No one reads books for information about football, and those who knew better than she read her novel with all the more pleasure because they discovered that on one point at least they were her superiors.

That, perhaps, is the chief value of error in any

kind of literature—that it makes the reader temporarily feel that he is an inch taller than the writer. Dr. Johnson endeared himself to posterity by making blunders in a book where blunders, one would have said, are least pardonable—in a dictionary. His accurate definitions are now of interest only to a few scholars; his mistakes are still a source of delight to a multitude of readers. There is more joy on earth over one error discovered in a good writer than over a hundred impeccable pages. If a dry-as-dust scholar suddenly discovered that there were no Moors in Venice at the time of Othello, with what enthusiasm he would write to *The Times* about it! Othello's noblest lines would never have quickened his pulses as the proof that Shakespeare had made a mistake would. Of all the letters that appear in the newspapers there are few written with such spiritual joy as those that point out a mistake. The true error-hunter is a man who searches for error as men search for gold during a gold-rush. His eurekas are uttered, not over immortal phrases but over some tiny lapse in geography, ornithology, or even grammar. The poets have given as much pleasure by writing inaccurately about birds as by writing beautifully about them. What ornithologist has not enjoyed all those lines in which the poet makes the female birds sing? Or, at least, what ornithologist did not enjoy those lines till yesterday? Now, unhappily, various writers have begun to produce evidence suggesting that in several species the female bird as well as the male does sing. I do not know whether this theory is true or not, but, if it is, the poets will now derive as much pleasure from the mistakes of the ornithologists as the

ornithologists once derived from the mistakes of the poets.

All comedy probably arises from our enjoyment of other people's mistakes. If we did not make mistakes, there would be nothing in the world to laugh at. Hence, if we regard laughter as a blessing we should pay a tribute to error. In the history of the world the man who makes mistakes has never been sufficiently appreciated. For all the mirth he has given us we have repaid him with the basest ingratitude. Of this ingratitude you will find evidence if you turn to *Punch* and look carefully at its admirable weekly collection of the errors of journalists and printers. Not long ago, it was *Punch*'s custom to give the name of the paper from which the misprint or mis-statement quoted was taken, and you would imagine that any journalist or printer would have felt honoured at having been singled out as one who had added to the gaiety of the most heavily taxed of nations. But it was otherwise. Protests—so, at least I have heard—poured into the *Punch* office from journalists and printers who were threatened with dismissal or reprimanded because their casual blunders had been trumpeted to all the world as treasures. Hence, in *Punch* today the source of a misprint is never given, and we are told vaguely that 'it comes from a 'morning paper,' a 'Sunday paper,' or an 'Irish paper.' In a world that rightly appraised error, the newspapers would protest against this as an attempt to rob them of the credit of having increased human happiness. If the *Oban Times* contains a good misprint why should the nation not be allowed to applaud

it? If a journalist on the *Berkhamstead Eagle* refers to 'The boy stood on the burning deck' as 'Wordsworth's immortal lyric,' why should his fame be obscured by a dull reference to a 'Hertfordshire paper'? So highly do I esteem misprints that if I were editor of a paper I should see to it that there was a worthy misprint in every number, if not on every page. I should also gratify my readers by misquoting the poets, putting towns in the wrong countries, confusing Darius and Xerxes, and inserting a daily anachronism. I am sure the paper would sell in millions, since it would give every reader a daily flush of superiority, a daily chuckle of delight in his own wisdom and a daily reason for writing a letter to the editor. And I should certainly give a post on my staff to the journalist, quoted by *Punch*, who recently began an article: 'The sting of the serpent is in its tail, we are told.'

The newspapers nowadays are full of accurate articles on natural history, but I confess, as an ordinary reader, no other sentence I have read about natural history has for a long time given me so much pleasure as this quiet mis-statement. The serpent, thus inaccurately represented, becomes a fabulous creature, wonderful as a Dragon, breathing comedy. And, everywhere we find similar evidence of the importance of error. The pedantically accurate schoolboy does not interest us as he repeats like a parrot the dull fact that William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings, but a boy capable of making the error of attributing the victory to William of Orange immediately becomes a person of national importance, and he is quoted in a thousand papers with

Prime Ministers and Mr. Shaw. Hence it seems to me  
it is not only human but wise to err. The novelists need  
not be perturbed by being accused of blundering.  
My own conviction is that they do not blunder half  
enough. We shall never have a novelist of the magni-  
tude of Shakespeare till we have a novelist who can make  
blunders of the same magnitude as Shakespeare's.

## VI

## SCIENCE

SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

Our age is a child of liberalism and rationalism. But it has another parent, whose influence has been even more important, is growing, and will continue to grow—Science, in its pure and applied forms. I shall use the word mainly in the restricted sense which we give it, though I regret our loss of the wider and more philosophic Greek view, to which science was the knowledge, not merely of the material and physical world, but of all that concerned man. I shall say nothing of the virtues and benefits of natural science, which are obvious. Apart from its material benefits it is self-justified. 'All men by nature desire to know...The feeling of wonder in men originally gave rise to philosophy and gives rise to it today; their interest was first excited by obvious problems, then advanced little by little and raised problems about the greater matters, e.g., about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun, and about the stars and about the genesis of the universe. Since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.' To be indifferent to science is to disown a fundamental human instinct which calls into action the great virtues not only of the intellect but of the character. It is to refuse the inexhaustible material gifts of science, which have already added so much to the health, resources, and powers of man, and, until the

internal combustion engine and atomic energy put into our hands an unlimited power of destruction, to his security.

There is little risk that we shall overlook the uses of science or our debt to it; but because we recognize them, it is possible, even more than with liberalism, to ignore the dangers and problems which it has created, and it is of these that I propose to speak. For one thing, it has upset our international relations by annihilating space. As we are so often reminded, it has abolished distance, made the five continents adjacent countries, and unified the world. At the beginning of the 19th century a letter took weeks, in favourable circumstances, to reach America, and its arrival was uncertain. Today we can speak from London to a friend in New York within fifteen minutes and be with him in twelve hours. We can get from the United States, from the Argentine, from the Antipodes, the food which a hundred years ago we had to grow at home, and it has become both more abundant and, in certain circumstances, more precarious. Mr. Baldwin was thought paradoxical when he said that the frontier of Britain was on the Rhine: it would be truer to say that it has disappeared. Clearly in such conditions the international relations of the past are an anachronism, and for the body politic as ill as the clothes of a child fit a grown man. But we have not yet developed the outlook demanded by modern conditions, and we still keep the isolated, provincial mind of an earlier age to which steam and electricity were unknown. Nor is it easy to change our view. The adult immigrant into America from

eastern, or southern Europe, even though transplanted into a new world far from his old life and surroundings, still retains much of the outlook and habits of his past: '*Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt.*' How much more difficult it is for the European in Europe to detach himself from the traditions in which he has grown up and from the atmosphere which he breathes. Psychiatry on a colossal scale is needed, if we are to adapt our minds to the new political philosophy which the change wrought by natural science in our conditions demands.

Another problem created by science may be described as *embarras de richesse*. It has abolished poverty or at least has given us the power to abolish it, but this virtue has a defect which passes unnoticed. We are like *nouveaux riches*, who have come into a fortune but are too uneducated to spend it intelligently. Every capacity is a capacity for evil as well as for good, and each addition to human power is a chance to misuse it, which men are quick to seize. Take printing as an example, and put into one scale the access to wisdom, knowledge, and beauty which it has made possible, and into the other the falsehood, corruption, and rubbish which the printing press has distributed to men: the latter scale would far outbalance the former, if good did not weigh heavier than evil. Further, the very wealth of objects and enjoyments, good and bad, useful and useless, which applied science has put at the disposal of a world that has not yet learnt to choose good and refuse evil, is a menace to true civilization. Give a small child ten shillings and take it into a well-stocked shop to spend the money, and watch it, distracted

by this wealth of opportunity, take up one toy, and drop it for another, and finally leave with something with which next day it will be disappointed; it does not know what it wants, still less what it ought to want. There you have a picture of many human beings in the presence of the abundance which technology has lavished on us, and a minor example of what Christ meant by the deceitfulness of riches. Needless to say, the fullest use is made of our weakness by advertisement, that peculiar development of the technological age. Its trumpet blows equally loudly the praises of the useful, the useless, the unnecessary, and the pernicious, but is mostly silent about the unnoticed treasures which are within the reach of all. It tells me that I can enjoy sunshine and natural beauty and cocktails and dancing and deck games in 'the blue Caribbean': it never reminds me that I need only look out of my window to see against the sky the dark branches of the elms, tracery more delicate and various than in any Gothic window, and, beyond, the winter sunlight suffusing the misty level of Christ Church Meadow. Why should it? The view costs nothing and there is no money to be made out of it.

Concurrently, technology has impaired one of the purest enjoyments and major virtues of humanity—craftsmanship—replacing it by mass manufacture, turning the skilled worker into an automaton on the production line, making men richer in their possessions and poorer in themselves. Hence the protests of William Morris and Ruskin, who 'saw as the gravest danger to true civilization the struggle between man and the machine for mastery, whether it appears in the degradation of

the operative or in the unthinking exultation in mechanical achievement.' The protests are sometimes extravagant, but the Age of Technology forgets, and needs to remember, the truth in Ruskin's words.

"No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast... As for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have, originally, nothing to say. We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being."

These are great and formidable problems which have come wrapped up in the gifts of science. It is of course absurd to blame her; she is guiltless; it is our hands that are unclean. Science goes steadily at her work, revealing, as she does it, the greatness of man, and if we misuse her, the blame is ours. There is no need to be corrupted or besotted by her gifts; there is no need to employ atomic energy to destroy life instead of enriching it; and aeroplanes can be used for other purposes than bombing. The remedy is in our hands. All that we need are the firm standards and clear philosophy of life, which distinguishes evil from good, and chooses good and refuses evil.

Unfortunately our age is weaker here than any epoch in civilization since the late fifteenth century

B.C. Its standards are not firm, its philosophy—if it can be said to have any philosophy at all—is not clear. This is partly the work of rationalism, but a further destructive force has been science. It has shattered the view of the world which, clearly held or vaguely pervasive, dominated western civilization for centuries. New knowledge in astronomy proved that the Earth is an infinitesimal fraction in the universe and not the centre of it. New knowledge in geology proved that it was not created some 5,000 years ago but has existed for millions of centuries. New knowledge in biology proved that the views of the origin of man, originating in Babylon, perhaps as far back as the twenty-second century B.C. and adopted in the Book of Genesis are—and it is not surprising—wrong. These discoveries are not as catastrophic as they appear and are still sometimes thought to be. The answer to the first was given by Thomas Hardy, who watching the ‘panoramic glide of the stars’ reflected that ‘the consciousness’ of such majestic speeding is derived from a tiny human frame!

The true lessons from this episode in the history of human thought are that we may expect our views of the universe to change, but that these changes, if they are peripheral and not central, need not alter our fundamental beliefs, and that theology should confine itself to its own business and not undertake the work of astronomy, geology, or other branches of knowledge—pronouncements by any science on matters lying outside its own province are always rash and generally wrong. When beliefs are false they must be discarded and no one can regret their disappearance. But that does not

lessen the immediate crisis. This is the most difficult age in history. We have to master the atomic energy; we have to see that civilization is enriched and not cheapened by the indiscriminate gifts of technology; and all the while the most difficult problems, economic, social, political and moral are pressing for solution. This is no moment to find ourselves with broken standards and uncertain principles. It is ill crossing a river in flood if you are not firm on your feet.

Hitherto I have been speaking of the direct and obvious impact of natural science on the world, the political problems which it has brought above the horizon, the opportunities of misuse which its gifts allow, its disturbing effect on our traditional outlook and views of life. But more important, and much more likely to escape our notice, is its subtle indirect influence on the modern mind, the results of living in an atmosphere largely dominated by it. Great ideas run away with men, and there is no trait more constant in human nature than its habit of pursuing a truth beyond its proper province: a history of civilization might also be written in terms, first of the discovery of great truths, and then of their exaggeration. That is a danger of which the Greeks were more aware than we, as is shown by their favourite proverb 'Nothing in excess', and their inclusion of 'balance' in the list of cardinal virtues. It can be illustrated from the history of Christianity. Dominated by the new 'good tidings' of the Gospel, many of its followers undervalued, or even rejected altogether, the gifts of secular civilization; and, later, looked into the Bible for answers to questions which science alone could solve. In what direction may science run away with

us, throw us off our balance, hinder us from seeing the world with clear eyes?

It would be easier to answer the questions, if we knew better the effects on the mind of the study of different subjects, and an exact analysis of these is badly needed. What is the psychological effect of studying natural science? When we ask this question, we are apt to be dismissed with vague phrases, to be told that it gives the student a scientific attitude to life or that it trains the mind to be critical and objective. The first of these statements is vague and the second is clearly untrue. In his own field the scientist is no doubt rigidly objective: he collects the facts relevant to a problem and makes no conclusions that the facts do not justify. But, outside his subject and where his emotions are involved, he is no more objective or less liable to prejudice than the rest of us. Further the 'scientific' approach to a subject is not confined to natural science but is necessary in every field of study and habitual in any serious student. An historian would be justly annoyed if you suggested that he was unscientific; so would an economist; so would a sociologist. In any subject from chemistry to archaeology, from *kulturgeschichte* to politics, the scientific method consists in ascertaining the facts and deciding what conclusions can legitimately be drawn from them. What more does the study of physics and chemistry do to discipline people in scientific method and to train them to be objective, than the study of economics or history?...

The method of natural science is to ascertain facts, to grasp them accurately, and to find expla-

nations for them: and, in so far as it is a training in observation, in precision, in objectivity, and in a rational habit of mind; though these qualities may not necessarily be transferred outside its special field, and are also trained by serious study of any subject. But there is something more important still, where natural science has a special advantage. It introduces us to the material world and thereby widens immensely the horizon of the mind, extends its range, gives it a sense of infinite possibilities, and makes life more interesting and alive. It is rare to find a scientist who is pessimistic or defeatist, for he lives in an atmosphere of progress, of creation, with the promise of a heaven—at least on earth. Natural science is creative and forward-looking. The scientist is an explorer of an unknown world with infinite possibilities of discovery; and not only is the act of discovery exciting, but it leads on to action, to practical results. It seeks to know, but also to transform, the world, and this is a further excitement and stimulus to those who follow it. No other subject has these qualities to quite the same extent though they should be present in politics and sociology, where there are immense areas waiting to be explored.

We should expect this creative, forward-looking, practical character of natural science to have a further effect on the mind. In past days I used to attend meetings of Faculties of Arts, of Science, and of Medicine, and I was struck by a certain difference of atmosphere between them. Faced with a Gordian knot, the instinct of the former was to untie it, of the latter to cut it. The 'artists' (if I may coin a word) turned a flood

of criticism on the question and were concerned to get to the bottom of it and see it in all its relations and possibilities, until action was sometimes submerged, in a mounting tide of doubts and difficulties. I came to the conclusion that the ideal committee would be composed, as to one-third of 'artists', to ensure that the problem was fully analysed, and, as to two-thirds, of scientists, to ensure that something was done. A training in natural science would seem likely to foster in the mind the temper and ideal of Burke: 'To be fully persuaded, that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame and without use... Life is a position of power and energy.'

On the other hand, a purely scientific education, uncorrected by other influences, has a narrowing effect. Natural science seems so all-embracing, that we do not notice that vast regions of life—and these the most important—do not come within its view, and a mind dominated by it would naturally be inclined to ignore or underestimate them. It has little to say about those creations of the human spirit which alone are immortal, great literature or great art. When we read Homer or Dante or Shakespeare, listen to a symphony of Beethoven, gaze at the Parthenon, or the paintings in the Sistine Chapel, natural science has little light to throw on what we feel or why we feel it... It is dumb if we ask it to explain the greatest human works or emotions or experiences.

Exultations, agonies,  
And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

Here we are in a mysterious yet familiar world which belongs to religion, poetry, and art, but not to science. Hence Whitehead's insistence that we should 'urge the doctrines of Science beyond their *delusive air of finality*'.

The chief limitation of natural science is that it is not human. But we have to live with human beings—including ourselves—and nearly all the problems of life are human, whereas the problems and subject-matter of physics, chemistry, and biology are not. When we enter their laboratories, we find little human there, except ourselves and our fellow-workers. We are in a world of cells, elements, atoms (or whatever substitute for them the latest analysis reveals). There are obvious dangers in living in such a world. It is too unlike the world of men to be good preparation for it: the fundamental reality in that world is human personality: the ideal society is a community of such personalities, self-controlling, self-developing, self-respecting and respecting others. But natural science is not concerned with personality, at least in this sense and in these relations: and there is a risk that when we return to the human world, we may be inclined to ignore its difference from the laboratory and even to treat men as if they were elements or cells.

I have suggested that an education in natural science is likely to encourage a forward-looking and active temper of mind, but that uncorrected and unsupplemented, it gives an inadequate view of the world, and that living and dealing with atoms and cells is no preparation for living and dealing with men. All intelligent scientists are aware of these dangers and are as anxious as anyone that science should not over-weight

the curriculum but be combined with humanistic studies, so that education may produce balanced human beings.

## VII

### CULTURE AND NATURE

JOHN COWPER POWYS

No refining of one's taste in matters of art or literature, no sharpening of one's powers of insight in matters of science and psychology, can ever take the place of one's sensitiveness to the life of the earth. This is the beginning and the end of a person's true education. Art and literature have been shamefully abused, have been perverted from their true purpose, if they do not conduce to it. The cultivation in one's inmost being of a thrilling sensitiveness to Nature is a slow and very gradual process. The first conscious beginnings of it in early childhood are precious beyond words as the origin of dominant memories; but the more deliberately we discipline our sensitive grasp of these things, the deeper our pleasure in them grows.

The first conscious aim which it would be wise to concentrate upon is the difficult art of simplification. The difference between cultured people and uncultured people, in regard to their response to Nature, is that the former make a lot of a little, whereas the latter make little of a lot. By this I mean that the less cultured you are the more you require from Nature before you can be aroused to reciprocity. Uncultured people require blazing sunsets, awe-inspiring mountains, astonishing waterfalls, masses of gorgeous flowers, portentous signs in the heavens, exceptional weather on earth, before their sensibility is stirred

to a response. Cultured people are thrilled through and through by the shadow of a few waving grass blades upon a little flat stone, or by a single dock leaf growing under the railings of some city square. It is an affectation to boast, as certain moralists do, that a city-dweller can get the same thrill from dingy sparrows and dusty foliage as from a rain-wet meadow full of buttercups. Better were it, than any such pretension, simply to recognize that in the deepest levels of culture city-dwellers are at a disadvantage compared with country-dwellers. Better were it, if it is your ill-luck to live in a city, to hasten into the country, at least once a week, and spend all your dreams during the other days in remembering that happy seventh-day excursion.

But granting that, by hook or by crook, we can obtain some daily or weekly glimpse of Nature free from masonry and pavements, it seems that the best way of deriving lasting enjoyment from such glimpses is to simplify one's pleasure to the extremest limit possible. By this I mean that it is always wise to avoid show-places and choose for your excursions into the country the simplest and most natural scenery you can find. To a cultured mind no scenery is ordinary, and such a mind will always prefer solitude in an unassuming landscape to crowds of people at some famous "inspirational" resort.

Fate itself usually decides what kind of scenery it is that we are able to reach without hardship; but, if the element of choice does enter, it would seem to enter as determining the sort of landscape which is most profoundly congruous with our temperament. There

is undoubtedly a deep affinity, probably both psychic and chemical, between every individual human being and some particular type of landscape. It is well to find out as soon as possible what kind this is; and then to get as much of it as you can. There must be many hill-lovers and many sea-lovers who suffer constantly from a vague discomfort and suppressed nostalgia, although such feelings may be completely unconscious, as year by year they are condemned to spend their lives in some pastoral or arable plain. On the other hand there must be plenty of people born for placid undulating luxuriant country, and yet doomed to live in some austere, rocky region where all the contours are harsh and forbidding.

There can be no doubt that the primary satisfaction in regard to Nature is sensual. People ought to cultivate sensuality where scenery is concerned. One ought to touch it, to taste it, to embrace it, to eat it, to drink it, to make love to it. Many people, when they spend a never-to-be-given-back day in the country, lose all the imaginative good of their experience by talking and fooling. It is almost impossible to get any really deep impressions—whether sensual or mystical—from such an excursion unless you go alone or with one other person—a blood-relation or someone you are in love with.

It is strange how few people make more than a casual cult of enjoying Nature. And yet the earth is actually and literally the mother of us all. One needs no strange spiritual faith to worship the earth.

Religious people—and quite properly—go to their mass fasting. Delicate and rare are the mystic feel-

ings they have; but not less exquisite are the sensations of those who walk in the pastures of the Great Mother. The real initiates of this cult will never sit down to breakfast without having walked at least a few steps in the open air. After a night's sleep the senses are virginal. Objects and sounds and fragrances ravish them then as they cannot do at a later hour. Between the life of the earth, freshened by her bath or sleep, and the life of any of her offspring, there is a mysterious reciprocity at such a time. A grass blade is more than a grass blade in the early morning; the notes of a bird more than a song; the scent of a flower more than a sweet fragrance.

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A

Each of the other hours has its own secret too. How porous and insubstantial are the moments just before and just after sunset. Who does not know, even among city-dwellers, that peculiar wash of dark blue air which seems to flow in over the whole earth and become a new firmament between earth and heaven until the first stars appear and the night falls? What an unique delight there is too in giving reckless scope to the delicious feeling of drowsiness that will overtake you sometimes on a warm thyme-strewn bank or by the edge of a hot cornfield. This noon-drowsiness, this magic noon-sleep, is an experience by itself. It is heavy with the rank saps and the gross juices of the geat-foot's engendering. It has certain primeval relaxings and releasings. Heady, tonic revelations it has too, hardly to be revealed to the profane.

But it is rather in the twilight than in the heat of the day, or perhaps just before the twilight, when the sun falls horizontally across the earth, that the deepest

buried springs of memory within us are stirred. What is there about those lengthening shadows when they fall across lawns or meadows from motionless tree-branches that stirs the mind and makes a person feel strangely kind to his worst-hated enemy? What is there about a long white road, disappearing in the twilight over a ridge of hills to some remote, unseen destination, that touches the imagination in a way so hard to put into words?

There is no necessity to answer such questions; but there is a deep necessity for waiting long and long for the experiences which are so inexplicable. He would be an arrogant fool who dared to call himself a cultured man without ever having made an intense and special cult of enjoying these rare moments. It will, I believe, be often noticed that when a person wants to appear cultured what he does is to profess aesthetic or artistic admiration for certain arrangements of form and colouring in Nature. Nothing is more annoying, more teasing than this. It seems so irrelevant to drag in these pseudo art-motifs when the life of Nature is so satisfying in itself. What the real Nature-lover does is to lose himself and all his most passionate art-theories in an indescribable blending of his being with the ploughland or meadowland over which he walks.

Some essential portion of his identity, some psychic projection of his ego, rushes forth to embrace this patch of earth-mould, this tuft of moss, this fern-grown rock. He does not really think about what the poets would call its beauty. In fact, whenever you hear anyone begin to murmur about "the beauties of Nature" you are justified in doubting whether

that one is possessed of the real clue to them. Such people are summer-lovers and holiday-lovers. A few October rains, a few November storms, and off they go, fleeing in discomfort to their cosy pavements and reassuring fire-escapes.

No, the real Nature-lover does not think primarily about the beauty of Nature; he thinks about her life. Beauty of course he does find in her, and a thousand suggestions for art too; but what attracts him, what he worships, is herself, her peculiar identity. Whether at the particular moment she is looking lovely or sinister, cheerful or sorrowful, peaceful or tragic, he loves her for herself. Her winds may be bitter, her airs cold, her frosts keen, her skies lowering, her streams swollen, her road rough, her mud deep, her swamps miasmic, her uplands barren; to the constant lover it is enough that she is what she is.

And her lover ever desires to have her to himself. The real initiate of Nature will naturally avoid the main highways and prefer to travel on foot. Not that he will be the type of person who has a mania for showing to the world how far he can walk. Such an individual is a freak-athlete, not a lover of the earth. The physical exhaustion of such exploits and the tenseness of so much strain dull the finer edges of one's receptivity and turn a natural happiness, full of delicate, lightly caught sensations, into a stark preoccupied endurance.

The whole essence of this great Nature-cult is to store up and lay by thousands and thousands of impressions. The memory can hold much more than most people give it credit for; and the quickened aware-

ness of our days depends upon our memory. The  
feelings that can be roused in us by innumerable  
little physical impressions, coming and going upon the  
wind, lost in the air, are feelings that bind our years  
together in a deep secretive piety. Nor need we ever  
be ashamed of such a secret life, hidden from the uproar  
and clamour of the world, nor be bullied into regarding  
it as selfish. Who knows? Who can tell? It may well  
be that Nature herself—or at least our own planetary  
Earth—depends upon such subtle ecstasies in her off-  
spring for her own indescribable self-realization. The  
feelings that move us at many moments when we are  
alone with Nature, with “thoughts that do often lie too  
deep for tears,” seem to bring their own justification.  
They associate themselves inevitably with generous  
human emotions, with indulgence towards all creatures,  
with pity for all creatures. And although not co-  
nsciously directed towards any form of definite action,  
they give to all our actions a large, transparent back-  
ground such as provides an inward escape.

A life deliberately given up, in the secret levels  
 of its being, to such a cult as this is not a wasted  
 life; it is a triumphant life. It fulfils some absolute  
 purpose in things that are outside and beyond the trou-  
 bled fevers of the world.

## VIII

### THE GANDHIAN WAY

C. E. M. JOAD

In what consists the most characteristic quality of our species? Some would say, in moral virtue; some, in godliness; some, in courage; some, in the power of self-sacrifice. Aristotle found it in reason... It was by virtue of our reason that, he held, we were chiefly distinguished from the brutes. Aristotle's answer gives, I suggest, part of the truth, but not the whole. The essence of reason lies in objectivity and detachment. It is reason's pride to face reality, when the garment of make-believe, with which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, has been stripped away. In a word, the reasonable man is a man unafraid; unafraid to see things as they are, without weighing the scales in his own favour, allowing desire to dictate conclusion, or hope to masquerade as judgment.

The reasonable man, then is detached; detached, that is to say, from the subject-matter which his reason investigates.

Is he also detached from himself? I think that he is not. I have known men of the highest intellectual ability who swore like "nitwits" when they broke their bootlaces, and lost their temper when they missed their trains. Great scientists and mathematicians are not remarkable for serenity of mind, while philosophers, who should be equable, are peppery; philosophers indeed, are noted for the irritability of their dispositions. Hence I think that Aristotle's pronounce-

ment hints at the truth rather than states it. The truth is that the characteristic virtue of humanity lies in the extension to the self, its passions, temptations, hopes and desires, of that attitude of objective detachment which the man of reason applies to the subject-matter which occupies the attention of the intellect. To combine non-attachment to the self with the passionate apprehension of certain truths and the disinterested attachment to certain principles is to generate what I take to be the most distinctive virtue of humanity—moral force.

It is in the possession of the virtue of detachment from self that, I suggest, lies the source of Gandhi's authority. A superficial expression of his detachment is his control over his body. The detached man has power over his body because, having effected its separation from the true self, he is enabled to use it as an instrument for the purpose of the self. Thus it is no accident that Gandhi can sleep at will at a moment's notice for any period that he likes to prescribe, no accident that he can deliberately lose or gain weight without altering his diet.

Another expression of the same virtue is the combination of a fixed resolution in regard to ends combined with a maximum adaptability in regard to means. The detached man is not a fanatic; he is never so attached to his way that he is not prepared to abandon it and substitute for it another way. Provided that the end remains clearly in view, he will approach it by whatever road events and circumstances suggest. Hence the combination of the politician and the saint in Gandhi which has so puzzled observers; the adroit-

ness in negotiation, the child-like simplicity which is seen in retrospect to have been the most astute political wisdom, the aptness at and the readiness for compromise are characteristics of a man who, firmly fixed in regard to his end, can be non-attached in regard to the means to that end. Thus Gandhi, the instigator of Civil Disobedience as a political weapon, feels no scruple at calling it off, the moment it seems unlikely to succeed; thus Gandhi, the saint who fasts for the good of his soul, is perfectly ready to make use of his fasting as a bargaining counter and to begin to eat again when fasting has served its political turn; thus Gandhi, the implacable opponent of the Constitution, is now prepared to co-operate in working the Constitution which he so strenuously opposed, provided only that the representatives of the Native States are elected by the peoples and not, as the Constitution at present envisages, nominated by the Princes; and thus, finally, Gandhi, the lifelong enemy of the British, in India, is now rightly regarded as the best friend of the British in India, a friend whose authority alone prevents not only a resumption of Civil Disobedience, but a resort to the more familiar methods of revolutionary agitation.

To return to detachment. Detachment, I am suggesting, is one of the most potent ingredients of that power so easy to recognize, so difficult to define, that we call moral force, a power which men, alone of sentient beings, possess.

Physical force affords no problems and raises no questions. A man is physically stronger than you and accordingly he has his way with you, either directly through the compulsion exerted by his superior strength,

or indirectly, through fear of the pains and penalties he may inflict upon you, if you thwart his will. It is the compulsion of direct physical force that throws one man over a precipice; it is fear of indirect physical force that causes another to deny himself in this life that he may please God and escape eternal torment in the next. Physical force bestows power, which may be defined as the ability to make other men do your will for fear of the consequences, if they do not.

But moral force can command no such penalties. If I resist moral force, I do not suffer. Why, then do I obey it? It is difficult to say, I recognize its authority, and, even if I resist it, I know that it is right and I wrong, and I recognize and know these things because I am myself a spirit, acknowledging the superior spirit of another. Thus moral force exerts not power but influence, which may be defined as the effect produced by one human being upon the mind and actions of another, not through fear of punishment or hope of reward, but by virtue of the latter's intuitive acknowledgment of intrinsic superiority.

It was by moral force that Gandhi induced thousands to besiege the gaols, demanding that they should be arrested; it was by moral force that he caused thousands to allow themselves to be beaten to pulp without lifting a hand in self-defence.

The experiment of Civil Disobedience inspired by moral force has an immense significance for the contemporary West. Is it only by devoting all its savings to equipping itself with the instruments of slaughter, is it only through the willingness of its members to use these instruments, whenever the Government of the State

to which they belong deems the mass-murder of the citizens of some other State to be desirable, that a modern community can hope to survive? Is there no way for a nation engaged in dispute to demonstrate the superior rightness of its cause, except by killing off as many members of the opposing nation as it can contrive? These are questions which insistently demand an answer in the Western world, and unless our generation can find some other answer than the one which has been traditionally given to them in the past, its civilization is doomed to destruction.

To Gandhi belongs the supreme credit of having had the wit to suggest and the courage to act upon another answer.

Christ and Buddha, he has said in effect, are right. It takes two to make a quarrel, and if you resolutely refuse to be the second, nobody can quarrel with you; refuse to resist by violence, and you will not only gain your ends more effectively than by violent resistance, but you will defeat violence itself by demonstrating its non-effectiveness. It is this method, theoretically as old as human thinking, which Gandhi sought—it is his supreme claim to our gratitude—to apply to the conduct of human affairs. He is a man who has shown himself persistently willing to take the risk of the noblest hypothesis being true. No doubt the method he advocates is in advance of the times; no doubt, therefore, his thought appears shocking and subversive to the conventional many. Inevitably it challenges vested interests in the thought of the present, unsettling men's minds, alarming their morals, and undermining the security of the

powerful and the established. Hence, like all original geniuses, he has been abused as an outrageous, and often as a blasphemous, impostor. Heterodoxy in art is at worst rated as eccentricity or folly, but heterodoxy in politics or morals is denounced as propagandist wickedness which, if tolerantly received, will undermine the very foundations of society while the advance on current morality, in which the heterodoxy normally consists, is achieved only in the teeth of vested interests in the thought and morals it seeks to displace. Thus, while the genius in the sphere of art is usually permitted to starve in a garret, the genius in the sphere of conduct, is persecuted and killed with the sanction of the law. An examination of the great legal trials of history from this point of view would make interesting reading; Socrates, Giordano Bruno, and Servetus were all tried and condemned for holding opinions distasteful to persons in authority in their own day, for which the world now honours them. One of the best definitions of a man of genius is he who, in Shelley's words, "beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germ of the flower and fruit of latest time." To put the point biologically, the genius is an evolutionary "sport" on the mental and spiritual plane, designed to give conscious expression to life's instinctive purpose. He represents, therefore, a new thrust forward on the part of life and destroys the prevailing level of thought and morals as surely as he prepares for a new one. The thought of the community as a whole presently moves up to the level from which the genius first proclaimed his disintegrating message, and we have the familiar historical spectacle of the hetero-

doxies of one age becoming the platitudes of the next.

It is in this sense that Gandhi is a moral genius. He has announced a method for the settlement of disputes which may not only supersede the method of force, but, as men grow more powerful in the art of destruction, must supersede it if civilization is to survive.

## IX

### ICHABOD

(Abridged)

SIR MAX BEERBOHM

It is not cast from any obvious mould of sentiment. It is not a memorial urn, nor a ruined tower, nor any of those things which he who runs may weep over. Though not less really deplorable than they, it needs, I am well aware, some sort of explanation to enable my reader to mourn with me. For it is merely a hat-box.

It is nothing but that—an ordinary affair of pigskin, with a brass lock. As I write, it stands on a table near me. It is of the kind that accommodates two hats, one above the other. It has had many tenants, and is sun-tanned, rain-soiled, scarred and dented by collision with trucks and what not other accessories to the moving scenes through which it has been bandied. Yes, it has known the stress of many journeys; yet has it never (you would say, seeing it) received its baptism of paste: if has not one label on it. And there, indeed, is the tragedy that I shall unfold.

For many years this hat-box had been my travelling companion, and was, but a few days since, a dear record of all the big and little journeys I had made. It was much more to me than a mere receptacle for hats. It was my one collection, my collection of labels. Well, last week its lock was broken. I sent it to the trunk-makers, telling them to take the greatest care of it. It came back yesterday. The idiots, the

accursed idiots, had carefully removed every label from its surface. I wrote to them—it matters not what I said. My fury has burnt itself out. I have reached the stage of craving general sympathy. So I have sat down to write, in the shadow of a tower which stands bleak, bare, prosaic, all the ivy of its years stripped from it; in the shadow of an urn commemorating nothing. . . .

Do not, reader, suspect that because I am choosing my words nicely, and playing with metaphor, and putting my commas in their proper places, my sorrow is not really and truly poignant. I write elaborately, for that is my habit, and habits are less easily broken than hearts. I could no more 'dash off' this my *cri de coeur* than I could an elegy on a broomstick I had never seen. Therefore, reader, bear with me, despite my sable plumes and purple; and weep with me, though my prose be, like those verses which Mr. Beamish wrote over Chloe's grave, "of a character to cool emotion". For indeed my anguish is very real. The collection I had amassed so carefully, during so many years, the collection I loved and revelled in, has been obliterated, swept away, destroyed utterly by a pair of ruthless, impious, well-meaning, idiotic, unseen hands. It cannot be restored to me. Nothing can compensate me for it gone. It was part and parcel of my life.

Orchids, jade, majolica, wines, mezzotints, old silver, first editions, harps, copes, hookahs, cameos, enamels, black-letter folios, scarabei—such things are beautiful and fascinating in themselves. Railway-labels are not, I admit. For the most part, they are crudely coloured, crudely printed, without sense of margin or spacing; in fact, quite worthless as designs.

No one would be a connoisseur in them. No one could be tempted to make a general collection of them. My own collection of them was strictly personal: I wanted none that was not a symbol of some journey made by myself, even as a hunter of big game cares not to possess the tusks, and the hunter of women covets not the photographs, of other people's victims. My collection was one of those which result from man's tendency to preserve some obvious record of his pleasures—the points he has scored in the game. To Nimrod, his tusks; to Lothario, his photographs; to me (who cut no dash in either of those veneries, and am not greedy enough to preserve *menus* nor silly enough to preserve press-cuttings, but do delight in travelling from place to place), my railway-labels. Had nomad been my business, and I been a commercial traveller or a King's Messenger, such labels would have held for me no charming significance. But I am only by instinct a nomad. I have a tether, known as the four-mile radius. To slip it is for me always an event, an excitement. To come to a new place, to awaken in a strange bed, to be among strangers! To have dispelled, as by sudden magic, the old environment. It is on the scoring of such points as these that I preen myself, and my memory is always ringing the 'changes' I have had; complacently, as a man jingles silver in his pocket. The noise of a great terminus is no jar to me. It is music. I prick up my ears to it, and paw the platform. Dear to me as the bugle-note to any war-horse, as the first twittering of the birds in the hedgerows to the light-sleeping vagabond, that cry of 'Take your seats, please!' or, better still, '*En voiture!*' or '*Partenza!*' Had I

the knack of rhyme, I would write a sonnet-sequence of the journey to Newhaven or Dover—a sonnet for every station one does not stop at. I await that poet who shall worthily celebrate the iron road. There is one who describes, with accuracy and gusto, the insides of engines; but he will not do at all. I look for another, who shall show us the heart of the passenger, the exhilaration of travelling by day, the exhilaration and romance and self-importance of travelling by night.

'Paris!' How it thrills me when, on a night in spring, in the hustle and glare of Victoria, that label is slapped upon my hat-box! Here, standing in the very heart of London, I am by one sweep of a pâstebrush transported instantly into that white-grey city across the sea. To all intents and purposes I am in Paris already. Strange, that the porter does not say, '*V'là, M'sieu!*' Strange, that the evening papers I buy at the bookstall are printed in the English language. Strange, that London still holds my body when a corduroyed magician has whisked my soul verily into Paris. The engine is hissing as I hurry my body along the platform, eager to reunite it with my soul... Over the windy quay the stars are shining as I pass down the gangway, hat-box in hand. They twinkle brightly over the deck I am now pacing—amused, maybe, at my excitement. The machinery grunts and creaks. The little boat quakes in the excruciating throes of its departure. At last!... One by one, the stars take their last look at me, and the sky grows pale, and the sea blanches mysteriously with it. Through the delicate cold air of the dawn, across the grey waves of the sea, the outlines of

Dieppe grow and grow. The quay is lined with its blue-bloused throng. These porters are as excited by us as though they were the aborigines of some unknown island. (And yet, are they not here, at this hour, in these circumstances, every day of their lives?) These gestures! These voices, hoarse with passion! The dear music of *French*, rippling up clear for me through all this hoarse confusion of its utterances and making me happy! . . . I drink my cup of steaming coffee—true coffee!—and devour more than one roll. At the tables around me, pale and dishevelled from the night, sit the people whom I saw—years ago!—at Charing Cross. How they have changed! The coffee sends a glow throughout my body. I am filled with a sense of material well-being. The queer ethereal exaltation of the dawn has vanished. I climb up into the train and dispose myself in the dun-cushioned *coupé*. *Chemins de Fer de l'Ouest* is perforated on the white antimacassars. Familiar and strange inscription! I murmur its impressive iambs over and over again. They become the refrain to which the train vibrates on its way. I smoke cigarettes, a little drowsily, gazing out of the window at the undulating French scenery that flies past me, at the silver poplars. Row after slanted row of these incomparable gracious trees flies past me, their foliage shimmering in the unawakened landscape. Soon I shall be rattling over the cobbles of unawakened Paris, through the wide white-grey streets with their unopened jalousies. And when, later, I wake in the unnatural little bedroom of walnut-wood and crimson velvet, in the bed whose curtains are white with that white-

ness which Paris alone can give to linen, a Parisian sun will be glittering for me in a Parisian sky.

Yes! In my whole collection, the Paris specimens were dearest to me, meant most to me, I think. But there was none that had not some tendrils on sentiment. All of them I prized, more or less. Of the Aberdeen specimens I was immensely fond. Who can resist the thought of that express by which, night after night, England is torn up its centre? I love well that cab-drive in the chill autumnal night through the desert of Bloomsbury, the dead leaves rustling round the horses' hoofs as we gallop through the Squares. Ah! I shall be across the Border before these doorsteps are cleaned, before the coming of the milk-carts. Anon I descry the cavernous open jaws of Euston. The monster swallows me, and soon I am being digested into Scotland. I sit ensconced in a corner of a compartment. The collar of my ulster is above my ears, my cap is pulled over my eyes, my feet are on a hot-water tin, and my rug snugly envelopes most of me. Sleeping-cars are for the strange beings who love not the act of travelling. Them I should spurn even if I could not sleep a wink in an ordinary compartment. I would liefer forfeit sleep than the consciousness of travelling. But it happens that, I, in an ordinary compartment, am blest both with the sleep and with the consciousness, all-through the long night. To be asleep and to *know* that you are sleeping, and to know, too, that even as you sleep you are being borne away through darkness into distance—this, surely, is to go two better than Endymion. Surely, nothing is more mysteriously delightful than this joint consciousness of sleep and movement.

Pitiable they to whom it is denied. All through the night the vibration of the train keeps one-third of me awake, while the other two parts of me profoundly slumber. Whenever the train stops, and the vibration ceases, then the one-third of me falls asleep, and the other two parts stir. I am awake just enough, to hear the hollow-echoing cry of 'Crewe' or 'York', and to blink up at the green-hooded lamp in the ceiling. Maybe, I raise a corner of the blind, and see through the steam-dim window the mysterious, empty station. A solitary porter shuffles along the platform. Yonder, those are the lights of the refreshment-room, where, all night long, a barmaid is keeping her lonely vigil over the beer-handles and the Bath-buns in glass cases. I see long rows of glimmering milk-cans, and wonder drowsily whether they contain forty modern thieves. The engine snorts angrily in the benighted silence. Far away is the faint, familiar sound—*clink-clank, clink-clank*—of the man who tests the couplings. Nearer and nearer the sound comes. It passes, recedes. It is rather melancholy . . . A whistle, a jerk, and the two waking parts of me are asleep again, while the third wakes up to mount guard over them, and keeps me deliciously aware of the rhythmic dream they are dreaming about the hot bath and the clean linen and the lovely breakfast that I am to have at Aberdeen, and about the Scotch air, crisp and keen, that is to escort me, later, along the Deeside.

Little journeys, as along the Deeside, have a charm of their own. Little journeys from London to places up the river or to places on the coast of Kent—journeys so brief that you lunch at one end and

have tea at the other—I love them all, and loved the labels that recalled them to me. But the labels of long journeys, of course, took precedence in my heart. Here and there on my hat-box were labels that recalled to me long journeys in which frontiers were crossed at dead of night, dim memories of small, crazy stations where I shivered half-awake, and was sleepily conscious of a strange tongue and strange uniforms, of my jingling bunch of keys, of ruthless arms diving into the nethermost recesses of my trunks, of suspicious grunts and glances, and of grudging hieroglyphics chalked on the slammed lids. These were things more or less painful—and resented in the moment of experience, yet even then fraught with a delicious glamour. I suffered, but gladly. In the night, when all things are mysteriously magnified, I have never crossed a frontier without feeling some of the pride of conquest. And, indeed, were these conquests mere illusions? Was I not actually extending the frontiers of my mind, adding new territories to it? Every crossed frontier, every crossed sea, meant for me a definite success, an expansion and enrichment of my soul. When, after seven days and nights of sea traversed, I caught my first glimpse of Sandy Hook, was there *no* comparison between Columbus and myself? To see what one has not seen before, is not that almost as good as to see what no one has ever seen?

Romance, exhilaration, self-importance, these are what my labels symbolised and recalled to me. That lost collection was a running record of all my happiest hours; a focus, a monument, a diary. It was my humble *Odyssey*, wrought in coloured paper on

pig-skin, and the one work I never, never was weary of. If the distinguished Ithacan had travelled with a hat-box, how finely and minutely Homer would have described it—its depth and girth, its cunningly fashioned lock and fair lining withal! And in how interminable a torrent of hexameters would he have catalogued all the labels on it, including those attractive views of the Hôtel Circe, the Hôtel Calypso, and other high-class resorts. Yet no! Had such a hat-box existed, and had it been preserved in his day, Homer would have seen in it a sufficient record, a better record than even he could make of Odysseus' wanderings. We should have had nothing from him but the Iliad. I, certainly, never felt any need of commemorating my journeys till my labels were lost to me. And I am conscious how poor and chill is the substitute. . . .

In the path of every collector are strewn obstacles of one kind or another; and the overleaping of them is part of the fun. As a collector of labels I had my pleasant difficulties. On any much-belabelled piece of baggage the porter always pastes the new label over that which looks most recent; else the thing might miss its destination. Now, paste dries before the end of the briefest journey; and one of my canons was that, though two labels might overlap, none must efface the inscription of another. On the other hand, I did not wish to lose my hat-box, for this would have entailed inquiries, and descriptions, and telegraphing up the line, and all manner of agitation. What, then, was I to do? I might have taken my hat-box with me in the carriage? That, indeed, is what I always did. But unless a thing is to go in the van it receives no label

at all. So I had to use a mild stratagem. ‘Yes,’ I would say, ‘everything in the van!’ The labels would be duly affixed. ‘Oh,’ I would cry seizing the hat-box quickly, ‘I forgot. I want this with me in the carriage.’ (I learned to seize it quickly, because some porters are such martinets that they will whisk the label off and confiscate it.) Then, when the man was not looking, I would remove the label from the place he had chosen for it and press it on some unoccupied part of the surface. You cannot think how much I enjoyed these manoeuvres. There was the moral pleasure of having both outwitted a railway company and secured another specimen for my collection; and there was the physical pleasure of making a limp slip of paper stick to a hard substance—that simple pleasure which appeals to all of us. Pressed for time, I could not, of course, have played my trick. Nor could I have done so—it would have seemed heartless—if any one had come to see me off and be agitated at parting. Therefore, I was always very careful to arrive in good time for my train, and to insist that all farewells should be made on my own doorstep. . . .

You must know that I loved my labels not only for the meanings they conveyed to me, but also, more than a little, for the effect they produced on other people. Travelling in a compartment, with my hat-box beside me, I enjoyed the silent interest which my labels aroused in my fellow-passengers. If the compartment was so full that my hat-box had to be relegated to the rack, I would always, in the course of the journey, take it down and unlock it and pretend to be looking for something I had put into it. It pleased me to see from

beneath my eyelids the respectful wonder and envy evoked by it. Of course, there was no suspicion that the labels were a carefully formed collection; they were taken as the wild-flowers of an exquisite restlessness, of an unrestricted range in life. Many of them signified beautiful or famous places. There was one point at which Oxford, Newmarket, and Assisi converged, and I was always careful to shift my hat-box round in such a way that this purple patch should be lost on none of my fellow-passengers. The many other labels, English or alien, they, too, gave their hints of a life spent in fastidious freedom, hints that I had seen and was seeing all that is best to be seen of men and cities and country-houses. I was respected, accordingly, and envied. And I had keen delight in this ill-gotten homage. A despicable delight, you say? But is not yours, too, a fallen nature? The love of impressing strangers falsely, is it not implanted in all of us? To be sure, it is an inevitable outcome of the conditions in which we exist. It is a result of the struggle for life. Happiness, as you know, is our aim in life; and alas! for every one of us it is the things he does not possess which seem to him most desirable, most conducive to great bliss. For instance, the poor nobleman covets wealth, because wealth would bring him comfort, whereas the *nouveau riche* covets a pedigree, because a pedigree would make him *of* what he is merely in. The rich nobleman who is an invalid covets health, on the assumption that health would enable him to enjoy his wealth and position. The rich, robust nobleman hankers after an intellect. The rich, robust, intellectual nobleman is (be sure of it) as discontented, somehow, as the rest

of them. No man possesses all he wants. No man is ever quite happy. But, by producing an impression that he *has* what he wants—in fact, by ‘bluffing’—a man can gain some of the advantages that he would gain by really having it. Thus, the poor nobleman can, by concealing his ‘balance’ and keeping up appearances, coax more or less unlimited credit from his tradesmen. The *nouveau riche*, by concealing his origin and trafficking with the College of Heralds, can intercept some of the homage paid to high birth. And (though the rich nobleman who is an invalid can make no tangible gain by pretending to be robust, since robustness is an advantage only from within) the rich, robust nobleman can, by employing a clever private secretary to write public speeches and magazine articles for him, intercept some of the homage which is paid to intellect.

These are but a few typical cases, taken at random from a small area. But consider the human race at large, and you will find that ‘bluffing’ is indeed one of the natural functions of the human animal. Every man pretends to have what (not having it) he covets, in order that he may gain some of the advantages of having it. And thus it comes that he makes his pretence, by force of habit, even when there is nothing tangible to be gained by it. The poor nobleman wishes to be thought rich even by people who will not benefit him in their delusion; and the *nouveau riche* likes to be thought well-born even by people who set no store on good birth; and so forth. But pretences, whether they be an end or a means, cannot be made successfully among our intimate friends. These wretches know all about us—have seen through us long ago. With

them we are, accordingly, quite natural. That is why we find their company so restful. Among acquaintances the pretence is worth making. But those who know anything at all about us are apt to find us out. That is why we find acquaintances such a nuisance. Among perfect strangers, who know nothing at all about us, we start with a clean slate. If our pretences do not come off, we have only ourselves to blame. And so we 'bluff' these strangers, blithely, for all we are worth, whether there be anything to gain or nothing. We all do it. Let us despise ourselves for doing it, but not one another.

By which I mean, reader, do not be hard on me for the show I made of my labels in railway-carriages. After all, the question is whether a man 'bluff' well or ill. If he brag vulgarly before strangers, away with him by all means. He does not know how to play the game. He is a failure. But if he convey subtly (and therefore successfully) the fine impression he wishes to convey, then you should stifle your wrath, and try to pick up a few hints. When I saw my fellow-passengers eyeing my hat-box, I did not, of course, say aloud to them, 'Yes, mine is a delightful life! Any amount of money, any amount of leisure! And what's more, I know how to make the best use of them both!' Had I done so, they would have immediately seen through me as an impostor. But, I did nothing of the sort. I let my labels proclaim distinction for me, quietly, in their own way. And they made their proclamation with immense success....

Only in a secondary, accidental way was my collection meant for the public eye. Else I should not have

hesitated to deck the hat-box with procured symbols of Seville, Simla, St. Petersburg and other places which I had not (and would have liked to be supposed to have) visited. But my collection was, first of all, a private autobiography, a record of my scores off Fate; and thus, positively to falsify it would have been for me as impossible as cheating at 'Patience'....

Yes, collecting is a mania, a form of madness. And it is the most pleasant form of madness in the whole world. It can bring us nearer to real happiness than can any form of sanity. The normal, eclectic man is never happy, because he is always craving something of another kind than what he has got. The collector, in his mad concentration, wants only more and more of what he has got already; and what he has got already he cherishes with a passionate joy. I cherished my gallimaufry of rainbow-coloured labels almost as passionately as the miser his hoard of gold. Why do we call the collector of current coin a 'miser'? Wretched? He? True, he denies himself all the reputed pleasures of life; but does he not do so of his own accord, gladly? - He sacrifices everything to his mania; but that merely proves how intense his mania is. In that the nature of his collection cuts him off from all else, he is the perfect type of the collector. He is above all other collectors. And he is the truly happiest of them all. It is only when, by some merciless stroke of Fate, he is robbed of his hoard, that he becomes wretched. Then, certainly, he suffers. He suffers proportionately to his joy. He is smitten with sorrow more awful than any sorrow to be conceived by the sane. I, whose rainbow-coloured hoard has been

swept from me, seem to taste the full savour of his anguish. . . :

I will begin all over again. There stands my hat-box! Its glory is departed, but I vow that a greater glory awaits it. Bleak, bare and prosaic it is now, but—ten years hence! Its career, like that of the Imperial statesman in the moment of his downfall, 'is only just beginning.'

There is a true Anglo-Saxon ring in this conclusion. May it appease whomever my tears have been making angry.

From *Yet Again*, by Sir Max Beerbohm.  
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## X

## BASIC WISDOM

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

In the world today, one sees so many things which please one and so many other things which appear to one to be so extraordinarily wrong. One wonders why this world of ours, having every opportunity of co-operating for the progress of humanity, loses itself always in conflict, in violence and in hatred. We see the clash of blind armies, as it were. We see the reproduction in the modern age of something which we thought had been done away with in the past ages. In the past ages, we had in many parts of the world—fortunately not so much in your country or mine—tremendous conflicts on some kind of religious dogma and people fought one another on the interpretation of some dogma. We see, today, people becoming dogmatic in fields other than that of religion and conflicts arising from that dogmatic approach to human affairs.

I should have thought that in the modern world there were many approaches we could have to life's problems but certainly not the narrow-minded, dogmatic approach. We may have a scientist's approach, a humanist's approach and possibly other approaches, too; but the dogmatic approach inevitably narrows the mind and prevents us from seeing much that we ought to see.

In the realm of human affairs as also in international affairs, we find this dogmatic approach

bringing in its train conflict, want of understanding, hatred and violence. I do not know how we are to get over this; but unless we get over this narrow-minded approach, I have no doubt that we shall fail to solve the problems of the day.

One of the brighter features of this age is—and I attach a great deal of value to it—that the barriers that separated the so-called East from the so-called West are gradually disappearing. That is a good sign. But, at the same time, other barriers seem to be growing in the East and in the West. We meet repeatedly in conferences and talk about the problems that face us. Sometimes we solve a problem or two but for each problem that we solve, half a dozen fresh ones crop up.

I remember that somebody made a calculation of the number of international conferences that were held after the conclusion of the First World War and before the commencement of the Second World War. It was a prodigious number. I do not quite know if we have exceeded that number since the Second World War ended.

This is an age of international conferences. A conference is always a good thing or almost always, because people, at any rate, meet round a table and discuss matters with good humour and, even if they do not always succeed in finding a solution, the effort is, nevertheless, always worthy of being made. That in itself results in something that is good. But I have often wondered why there has been this failure in the past to find solutions to our problems. Is it due to a lack of wit in statesmen or to a lack of understanding? I do not think it is either, because

they have been able and earnest statesmen desiring peace and co-operation. Even so, somehow or other, solutions have escaped them. Why, then, is it so? I do not know; perhaps, we work too much on the superficial plane, finding solutions to the troubles of the moment and not looking to the deeper causes.

I put this to you for your consideration, because something does come in the way. With all the earnestness we may possess, sometimes we do not get over those old and new barriers that come in the way of mutual understanding. Then, I think that, in spite of our vaunted civilization, in spite of the advance of science and technology, we have lost our grip on some of the basic things of life, something that gives anchorage to life and some standard with which we could measure value.

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We have advanced greatly in science—I am a great believer in science—and the scientific approach has changed the world completely. I think that if the world is to solve its problems, it will inevitably have to be through the means of science and not by discarding science. Nevertheless, I find that the sheer advance of science has often enough made people unscientific. That is an extraordinary thing to say, but what I mean is that science has become so vast and all-pervading that scientists are unable to grasp things in their entirety and have become narrower and narrower in each individual subject. They may be very brilliant in some subjects but they seem to have no grip on life as a whole.

In the ancient civilizations of India and Greece that one reads about, one has or, at any rate, I have the feeling that people, though much more limited

in the knowledge at their disposal, certainly had an integrated view of life. They were not so distracted; they could see life as a whole in spite of the fact that they did not know as much or nearly as much as the average undergraduate knows today. Because of this integrated view of life, they had a certain wisdom in their approach to life's problems.

Whether that is true or not I do not know, because one is apt to endow the past with a certain glamour. It may be that I am wrong, but in any event one thing seems to me to be certain, namely, that we of today have no integrated view of life; that we, however clever we may be and however much of facts and knowledge we may have accumulated, are not very wise. We are narrower than the people of old, although every fact has gone to bring us together in this world. We travel swiftly, we have communications, we know more about one another and we have radio and all kinds of things. In spite of all these widening influences, we are narrower in our minds. That is the extraordinary thing which I cannot understand.

I put this to this gathering of university men, because after all it is for the universities to tackle this problem more than for any other organization. If the universities do not teach some kind of basic wisdom, if they think in terms of producing people with degrees who want certain jobs, then the universities may have perhaps solved to a very minor extent the problem of unemployment or provided some technical help or other; but they will not have produced men who can understand or solve the problems of today.

You and I live in Asia. Perhaps, one of the biggest facts of today is this new and changing phase of Asia. What is happening in Asia is a fact of tremendous historical significance. It is difficult to grasp it entirely or to understand it but I think any person must see that something very big has happened and is happening all over Asia. There is a certain dynamism about it. We do not like much of what is happening and we may like something of what is happening, but the fact remains that tremendous and powerful elemental forces are at play in Asia. For us just to sit in our ivory towers and look at them, with dislike or approval, is not good enough. If we wish to play any effective part in this world of ours we have to understand them. For some three or four hundred years, a good part of Asia was under a kind of eclipse and there was a basic urge for political freedom for a long time.

If you read the history of Asia—it is a long, long history—you will find that during the greater part of these thousands of years, Asia has played an important part in world affairs. It is only during the last three or four hundred years that Asia has become static, quiescent and rather stagnant in thought and in action in spite of all the virtues she might have possessed. Naturally and rightly, she fell under the domination of other more progressive, vigorous and dynamic countries. That is the way of the world and that is the right way. If you are static, you must suffer for it. And now, you see a change coming over Asia and because it is belated the change comes with a rush, upsetting many things and doing many things that one does not like. That

this big change is coming over us, however, is a major fact. I do not know—I do not suppose any of you know—what ultimately this change will lead to in Asia.

You and I live in this changing Asia of today. Many of you will have the burden of facing these problems which are not of today or tomorrow but which may last for a generation or more than one generation. The burden is yours because many of us whom you honour are in the afternoon of our lives and have, perhaps, only a few more years to work and labour, which, I am sure, we will do to the best of our capacity and strength. And so, it is for you, young graduates of today, to prepare yourselves in mind and body and, as much as you can, in that deeper wisdom to understand these problems and to function actively and help in the solution of them.... In the world of today, it is not enough for you to take up a distant and academic attitude and look on and just advise others or criticize others. Today, every man has to shoulder his burden. If he does not, well, he falls out; he simply does not count.

I have found many of our young men and women—I am talking more of India than of Ceylon because I do not know much about Ceylon—full of enthusiasm, full of energy, full of earnestness, but, if you will permit me to say so, singularly academic or, if you like, singularly cut off from life's realities. During their student days, they often debated and passed resolutions on this subject or that, but afterwards, when they went out into the world, they seemed to think that life itself was a continuous debating society where they could pass votes of censure or criticize others without doing much themselves.

Now, that is not a very helpful attitude. Perhaps, it is due to the fact that for the past so many years, most of us did not have much chance of doing anything constructive. Our main job was to fight for the freedom of our country in a destructive way, in an oppositionist way and not in a creative way. The result is that we cannot get rid of this negative and destructive outlook. Instead of helping to build something, we just sit down and criticize others who may be, rightly or wrongly, trying to build. At least, they are trying to build. I think that mere criticism is a very unhelpful and bad attitude to adopt. In whatever country you may be, what is required today is a constructive and creative approach. Certainly there is always something to destroy, something that is bad; but mere destruction is not enough. You must also build.

One thing more. I take it that a university is essentially a place of culture, whatever 'Culture' might mean. But that takes me back to where I began. There is a great deal of culture all over the place and I, normally, find that those people who talk most loudly of culture, according to my judgment, possess no culture at all. Culture, first of all, is not loud; it is quiet, it is restrained, it is tolerant. You may judge the culture of a person by his silence, by a gesture, by a phrase or, more especially, by his life generally. The peculiar, narrow idea of culture that is spreading is that culture depends on the kind of headgear you wear, of the kind of food you eat or on similar superficial things which, I do not deny, have a certain importance but which are very secondary in the larger context of life.

Each country has certain special cultural characteristics which have been developed through the ages. Similarly, each age has a culture and a certain way of its own. The cultural characteristics of a country are important and are certainly retained, unless of course, they do not fit in with the spirit of the age. So, by all means, adhere to the special culture of your nation. But there is something that is deeper than national culture and that is human culture. If you do not have that human culture, that basic culture, then even that national culture of which you may be so proud has no real roots and will not do you much good. Today more especially, it has become essential for us to develop, in addition to such national culture as we may have, something that can only be called a world culture. There is much talk of One World and I believe that, at some time or other, that talk must bear fruit or else this world will go to pieces. It may be that we will not see that One World in our generation but if you want to prepare for that One World you must at least think about it. You have at least a culture to sustain you; and there is no reason why you should live your lives in narrow grooves, trying to think yourselves superior to the rest of the world.

We live surrounded by all kinds of dark fears in this new year. Probably, the prevailing feeling in the world of today is fear. Almost everybody is afraid of something; every country is afraid of some other country and, of course, fear is a thing which leads to all kinds of undesirable consequences. Fear is probably the most evil of sensations and we are living under the dominance of fear. If we could get rid of this fear to some

extent, perhaps, it would be far easier for us to solve our problems.

Besides fear, we see in the world a great deal of hope and earnestness and a great deal of expectation of better things at the same time. We see creative and constructive as well as destructive and negative impulses at work. I do not know which will triumph in the near or the distant future, but obviously it will be impossible for me and impossible for you to function adequately if we do not believe in the ultimate triumph of the creative and unifying processes of the day.

However that may be, even the attempt to work for some great cause not only helps that cause but also helps us. We are not prophets and we do not know what the morrow may bring but it is rather satisfying to work for the morrow of your choice. It brings something into your life which makes it worth while. If you align yourself to some great purpose or to something elemental, it ennobles you. Whether the reward comes or not, the mere fact of working for it is reward enough.

With all the evil that we see around us, and with all its degradation, we have to live in this world. There is, nevertheless, plenty of good in the world and we have to see that there is plenty of what I, as a Hindu, would call the element of divinity in the individual as well as in the group. If we can have our feet firmly planted on the soil and do not lose ourselves in imaginary vagaries and at the same time have some of that divine fire in us, too, then, perhaps, we might be able to balance ourselves and develop some kind of an inte-

grated life. Somebody has said—and I would like you to feel that way:

Lord, though I live on earth, the child of earth,  
Yet I was fathered by the starry sky.

I have come to Ceylon again after an interval of ten years. I have been here on two or three previous occasions also. Whenever I come here, I do not feel that I have come to a strange country—I feel very much at home. Your welcome and the friendly faces that I see everywhere make me feel at home. Quite apart from that, you of Ceylon and we of India are intimately related in our cultural inheritance, as you all know very well, and it does not make much difference what shape politics takes. You are an independent country, as you should be, so are we an independent country, as we should be. Political barriers should not be allowed to come into play, when culturally our people look to each other. When I come here, I think even more than I normally do—and normally I think a great deal—of that greatest and wisest and brightest son of India, whom you honour greatly and whom all of us in India and many other countries also greatly honour. The bond of the Buddha and all that it stands for is a bond between India and Ceylon which nothing can break. Whenever one thinks of the Buddha, one inevitably thinks of his great teaching; and I often feel that, perhaps, if we think more of that basic teaching of the avoidance of hatred and violence, we may be nearer the solution of our problems.

## THE ART OF LIVING

LORD CHATFIELD

Entering the navy so young and going to sea when only fourteen, my life was early of an adventurous nature. The sea life gripped my mind; I had, as the most insignificant member of a ship's company in a large sailing corvette, to struggle to emerge, however slightly, above the mass of humanity by which I was surrounded. My very insignificance among the 250 officers and men was, in itself, a lesson. I was to learn that it was not for myself I was to think, so much as for the ship. I had my small task in every duty on deck or aloft; however simple it might be, the task was mine. If I failed in my task, something however small went wrong, and I suffered for it physically and mentally, like the last man in cricket who makes a 'duck'.

These early lessons in sea life sank deep into my mind; I was one of a team, to think not of myself, but of my ship and shipmates, and not to let them down. None too easy at first, it became gradually a natural and pleasing principle. Those around me possessed the same spirit, however good or bad they might be in other ways; trained to get the utmost out of themselves; to fit themselves to perform, to the utmost of their ability, the duty in the ship for which they were most adapted.

And I learned also in those early days, something equally great in importance—to get on with one's fellow men, and to be even-tempered; because ill temper in a community does not pay and often leads

to ruin. The basis of all such qualities is unselfishness and self-sacrifice, both terribly difficult things to acquire. They were easier to acquire at sea, because one had as an inspiration, the safety of the ship and her efficiency, as well as the team spirit the ship herself enforces on her crew.

Let not the reader think I wish to imply that all these lessons became part of my early character—far from it—but the lessons were somehow planted in my inner mind. It was as if they said to me, ‘these thoughts you cannot engrain, thus early, in your personality, but we shall always be in your mind, normally forgotten; nevertheless, each time you make use of us we shall grow stronger and sink deeper into your character. One day we may become part of it but for the present we shall be at hand, ready for you to turn to, in a difficult moment.’

There was another side of these early lessons. One began to judge one’s fellow men, and to choose one’s friends from those who acquired them in the same manner as oneself. That is normal in life. Similar personalities do not always blend, but similar characters do so.

Now, the spirit in a ship, as I have briefly related above, is the basis of normal discipline, a discipline which is never irksome, unless it is abused by those in authority. Discipline in a ship is more vital than in any other calling, for unless an order is obeyed without a moment’s hesitation, an accident may occur, or even a ship be lost. It is in consequence, the easiest quality for a seaman to absorb, for its need is self-evident to the most stubborn will. It makes it easier to turn out of one’s hammock, or bunk, in the middle

of the night when so ordered, though your inclination is all the other way! It is a far easier quality to acquire than self-discipline, but it may help that also. To discipline one's thoughts and actions in ordinary life, even though it is to your vital interest to do so, is much harder, for you can so easily twist your mind to deceive yourself into believing that some unpleasant task is really too much to expect of you. As a mischievous wit once suggested, "It is better to earn a slight reprimand, than to perform an unpleasant duty." Moreover, if you do not allow your sense of self-discipline to act, you only harm yourself, and it can appear but a minor loyalty in life. It is so often true to say that the harder choice of action is the correct one.

The sailor, arrived at years of discretion, his character and personality roughly hewn, full of ambition and hope, begins a more definite stage: that of both obeying his superiors and learning to command others. His acts of command will have to be applied in two ways—first to enforce his authority; to teach those under him to obey him with keenness; to make them an efficient team and, if he can, make them more efficient than any other team in a ship or fleet. Secondly, to look after those he leads, as the head of any community must do. If he is to succeed he must have himself been "through the mill," understand the minds of those he commands, know what is wanted, the extent to which his ship's company can reasonably be stretched, without reaching (except in emergency) the elastic limit.

This will also be a matter of judgment, another important quality which can only be gradually acquired:

which needs trials and errors to bring it to function. It is a quality which grows with one's years, and is of ever interesting value as one rises in the world to greater responsibilities.

If you are to get the utmost out of those you command, you must possess their confidence and, at least, must not be disliked by them. I have told in my autobiography how, as a young commander, I was appointed to a ship in a poor state of efficiency. I had first to plan how to get the ship efficient; then to endeavour to inspire the ship's company and tell them how I intended to achieve the plan: to make them realize that I could succeed only with their help and with team spirit, that I would reorganize them, that each man would have his task, and that by pulling together we could make the ship proud of herself and no longer a disgrace. Soon they gained confidence in me and in themselves, and the ship became an entirely different vessel. I also gained confidence in myself.

Self-confidence is an essential quality at sea; but it must be a confidence justified by the ability to analyse in one's mind the pros and cons, to give full weight to essentials and to discard the lesser factors. Self-confidence goes hand in hand with good judgment: you can have one without the other, but you will not then rise so high in life. Your aim, then, must be to have confidence in your own judgment. If you are early to gain self-confidence you must seize the opportunities life offers you; most young people hesitate if offered a difficult task: to accept it needs courage.

Courage itself, as we all know, has varying forms. It is more often connected with the lack of fear in danger

or of fear of death, or the readiness to face the risk of it. But it has many lesser forms. It requires courage to take on some difficult duty, which if you fail in it, will lower your good repute; yet if you are to gain self-confidence the one thing you must not do is to refuse. To accept the duty and to fail to do as well as was expected of you, is better than to shrink from it. You will at any rate gain experience and improve your judgment; so will you face your next task with improved self-confidence.

The necessity for boldly seizing every opportunity to gain experience was early impressed on my mind. I have related elsewhere, some of those occasions when I was offered and accepted difficult tasks; how sometimes I succeeded, and sometimes I did not. The consequences of failure are small in early life, but later in life, to fail may be penalising to your career. One must therefore learn the value of taking proper risks when young and profiting by experience. If you do not venture to take risks in your youth in every side of life, you will not be able to do so when older: so you will be marked down as over-cautious, a damning limitation in a sailor.

If you are to take risks you need luck. Luck plays a big part in life from birth to death. It is beyond your control, but the man who breaks the bank at Monte Carlo must at any rate have had the courage to try to do so and to risk his money! Luck seldom comes to those who do not deserve it. Admiral Beatty was a case in point. He had great luck early in life, but he took the tide at the flood, seized his chances and had the character, energy and ability to press on with courage to the top of the naval ladder.

The successful taking of risks, and the part luck plays in it is an important factor in life that I would dwell on for a moment. Little can be accomplished worth doing, without taking risks. There is also an excitement in doing so. Shall I cross the road now, or wait until it is absolutely safe? How often do people ask themselves that question in a thousand forms. There was no battle Nelson won in which he did not take risks; risks that to an ordinary mind would seem unjustifiable. But at the Nile and Trafalgar, he exposed part of the British Fleet to severe punishment in order to gain a tactical position which would be annihilating to his foe. He trusted to the skill of his Captains, the courage and ability of his men, and to their confidence in his experienced judgment. What a lesson his deeds have been to all who have followed in his footsteps and held similar responsibilities.

In neither of these two classic examples was luck a contributory factor. Yet we know how good luck can retrieve incorrect judgment in taking a risk—"saved by the skin of his teeth!" Some call it fate or destiny. You are considered to be one of the lucky ones if you succeed; unlucky if you fail. They may be true or may not be. If you believe too much in your fate, you will become a fatalist. If you believe too much in your luck it will let you down perhaps at a great moment. Let us rather think of our "future" and be determined to control it; to face life with all the talents God has planted in us. We must boldly face the rules of life. Life is a hard taskmaster. To be master of your future, you must accept life's rules; hard, unsympathetic, unreasonable

they may be. But if you strive to keep them, gradually they will respond to your will. One way to broaden the opportunities of appreciating correctly the risks in life is to learn from others.

There is an immense amount to be learnt from the successes and failures of others—not only those with whom one's life runs, but from those of the past. There is seldom, if ever, a big risk to be faced, which has not been of a familiar type faced by some character in history. You can learn an immense amount from the careful study, as opposed to the casual reading, of great biographies. How much can the seaman learn from past British sailors and by imagining himself in their place, seek inspiration to follow their example, or be guided by their misfortunes. But from those of one's own time one can also learn much. The knowledge you thus gain is not comparable with that gained by practical experience, but the sum of it is considerable and a valuable addition in your own mind to what you can personally absorb. To do this, however, you must have the "determination to learn" firmly in your mind, so that you will gain the right lessons, even without thinking of it at the time. Quite apart from the stimulus you can yourself obtain from others in that way is the support you can give to others. I remember when commander-in-chief, a flag officer commanding one of the squadrons of the fleet informed me he was very disappointed with the disciplinary powers of one of his captains. An order he himself had given to the ship had only been half-heartedly performed; did I think it would be best for him to go on board and address the ship's company? I advised him not to do so, at this

stage, but to send for the captain and tell him he was expected to "Command" his ship. Tell him, I said, that if he cannot get his orders obeyed instantly and willingly, I will send another captain to command the ship who will do so. With that support, a minor incident was overcome rapidly. It is essential to give full support from your own experience to those under you. One day you will arrive at an age when you will no longer worry about difficulties; they will no longer appear difficulties, for you will have confidence in your ability and rapid judgment.

One of the temptations in life to be guarded against is that of sinking into a spirit of complacence, "to slack off." As we climb the hill of life, it is natural to rest a moment on reaching the summit of a ridge. The temptation is to stay there, satisfied with your efforts. To advance again and tackle the next peak needs a special quality—energy.

Energy is one of the principal factors in a successful career, whatever walk of life you may follow; though some professions give more scope for energy, and greater rewards to the energetic, than others. A dull and somewhat monotonous existence is perhaps enforced in office or factory. Life at sea in the Navy gives, on the contrary, full scope for energy. This partly arises from the periodical change from ship to ship, which gives new openings, new men and material to handle, new hopes, a chance to try new methods, and ideas. To have brought a ship, or the part of her allotted to you, to a state of efficiency and then to rest on your oars is a legitimate aim; but the sailor will not rest for long. A new appointment will come; a new ship to learn, a new

ship's company to train and enthuse, new weapons to master; perhaps to serve under a new captain, or admiral. Such a life is bound to test the human character to its highest and to keep it alert.

Life would be unbearably Spartan and difficult, however, if we never relaxed. The mind as well as the body needs change and the most effective way to get it is by physical exercise, especially by taking up games and sports of every kind. In some such way one should usefully employ and enjoy one's moments of sport. Frequently, I have felt mentally overtired after a long day in an Admiralty Office; have gone to the club and played two or three games of squash rackets, then home to dine, all my tired feeling vanished. Sitting motionless in a chair stagnates your circulation and gives you a feeling of mental exhaustion. Stand on your head, or go for a run, and you will find that you are not really tired, but ready for another spell of mental work. But apart from the value of exercise for a man leading a sedentary life, games can give you an altogether happier existence. To change your mind from mental study to sport and back again, balances your mind and your life: the difficulties become smaller, the worries disappear and the improvement of your physique improves your mental qualities—*Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*—there is no better advice, I believe, to give to the young, than to balance your mental work with physical exercise—and not only to the young!

I have now stressed the value of certain qualities in life for those who follow an active and practical career. To be born with, or to acquire some or all of these qualities will help, but even if you possess

them, they will not bring success in life automatically. You may be energetic and self-confident, but lack self-control; have good judgment but fail to use it; be full of ability and zeal but steer a wrong course. Something more is essential, you must have an aim in life, to draw the qualities out and concentrate them on a target: some fiery need in your mind which will inspire you, direct you and enable you to get the most out of yourself and your abilities.

I have stressed the influence of life on the sea and of the ships in which sailors mainly live, as it can inspire the young—the team spirit of the crew and its effect on the mind early in life, of working for the ship rather than for oneself. It is the natural consequence of a common aim, a common responsibility, of getting the most out of the vessel you are part of, and of ensuring her safety and success. Having achieved it, you obtain pride and happiness in the ship and in yourself. Should not that same spirit animate those in other walks of life? The 'Ship' is where you are, where you work, and your shipmates stand around you, those who work with you for a common purpose.

## XII

### ON GROWING OLD

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Ten years ago I made my final bow on the stage (metaphorically speaking, for after my first plays I refused to expose myself to the indignity of this proceeding); the press and my friends thought I did not mean it and in a year or so would emerge from my retirement; but I never have, nor have I had any inclination to do so. Some years ago I decided to write four more novels and then have done with fiction also. One I have written (I do not count a war novel that I wrote as part of the war work I was asked to do in America and which I found a weariness to do), but I think it unlikely now that I shall write the other three.....I am content now to keep these three novels as an amusement for my idle reveries. That is how the author gets most delight out of his books; when once he has written them they are his no longer and he can no more entertain himself with the conversations and actions of the persons of his fancy. Nor do I think I am likely at the age of seventy or over to write anything of any great value. Incentive fails, energy fails, invention fails. The histories of literature with pitying sympathy sometimes, but more often with a curt indifference, dismiss the works of even the greatest writer's old age, and I have myself sadly witnessed the lamentable falling off of talented authors among my friends who went on writing when their powers were but a shadow of what they had been. The

best of the communications an author has to make is to his own generation, and he is wise to let the generation that succeeds his choose its own exponents. They will do it whether he lets them or not. His language will be Greek to them. I do not think I can write anything more that will add to the pattern I have sought to make of my life and its activities. I have fulfilled myself and I am very willing to call it a day.

One sign that calls my attention to the notion that I am wise to do so is that whereas I have always lived more in the future than in the present, I have for some time now found myself more and more occupied with the past. Perhaps it is but natural when the future must inevitably be so short and the past is so long. I have always made plans ahead and generally carried them out; but who can make plans now? Who can tell what next year or the year after will bring, what one's circumstances will be and if it will be possible to live as one lived before? The sailing-boat in which I used to like to lounge about on the blue waters of the Mediterranean has been seized by the Germans, my car has been taken by the Italians, my house has been occupied by the Italians and now by the Germans, and my furniture, books and pictures, if they have not been looted, are scattered here and there. But no one can be more indifferent to all this than I. I have enjoyed every luxury that man can desire, and a couple of rooms to myself, three meals a day and access to a good library will sufficiently satisfy my wants.

My reveries tend often to be concerned with my long past youth. I have done various things I regret, but I make an effort not to let them fret me; I say to

myself that it is not I who did them, but the different I that I was then. I injured some, but since I could not repair the injuries I had done, I have tried to make amends by benefiting others.... Most people talk too much and old age is loquacious. Though I have always been more disposed to listen than to talk, it has seemed to me of late that I was falling into the defect of garrulity, and I no sooner noticed it than I took care to correct it. For the old man is on sufferance and he must walk warily. He should try not to make a nuisance of himself. He is indiscreet to force his company on the young, for he puts them under constraint, they cannot be quite themselves with him, and he must be obtuse if he does not detect that his departure will be a relief to them. If he has made some stir in the world they will on occasion seek his society, but he is foolish should he fail to see that it is not for its own sake, but that they may go and prattle about it afterwards with friends of their own age. To them he is a mountain you have climbed not for the fun of the ascent or for the view you may get from the top, but so that you may recount your exploit when you have come down again. The old man is well advised to frequent the society of his contemporaries, and he is lucky if he can get any amusement out of that. It is certainly depressing to be bidden to a party where there is no one but has one foot in the grave. Fools don't become less foolish when they grow old, and an old fool is infinitely more tiresome than a young one. I don't know which are more intolerable, the old people who have refused to surrender to the assault of time and behave with a nauseous frivolity, or those fast-rooted in times gone by

who have no patience with a world that has refused to stand still with them. These things being so, it might seem a poor look-out for the old man, when the young do not want his company and he finds that of his contemporaries tedious. Nothing remains to him then but his own, and I look upon it as singularly fortunate that none has ever been so enduringly satisfactory to me as mine. I have never liked large gatherings of my fellow creatures, and I regard it as not the least of the compensations of old age that I can make it an excuse either to refuse to go to parties or slink away quietly when they have ceased to entertain me. Now that solitude is more and more forced upon me I am more and more content with it. Last year I spent some weeks by myself in a little house on the banks of the Combahee river, seeing no one, and I was neither lonely nor bored. It was indeed with reluctance that I returned to New York when the heat and the anopheles obliged me to abandon my retreat.

It is strange how long it can take one to become aware of the benefits a kindly nature has bestowed on one. It is only recently that it occurred to me how lucky I was never to have suffered from head-aches, stomach-aches or tooth-aches. I read the other day that Cardan in his autobiography, written when he was approaching eighty, congratulated himself on still having fifteen teeth. I have just counted mine and find that I have twenty-six. I have had many severe illnesses, tuberculosis, dysentery, malaria and I know not what, but I have neither drunk too much nor eaten too much, and I am sound in wind and limb. It is evident that one cannot expect to get much satisfaction

out of old age unless one has fairly good health; nor unless one has an adequate income. It need not be a large one, for one's wants are few. Vice is expensive, and in old age it is easy to be virtuous. But to be poor and old is bad; to be dependent on others for the necessities of life is worse: I am grateful for the favour of the public which enables me not only to live in comfort, but to gratify my whims and to provide for those who have claims upon me. Old men are inclined to be avaricious. They are prone to use their money to retain their power over those dependent on them. I do not find in myself any impulse to succumb to these infirmities. I have a good memory, except for names and faces, and I do not forget what I have read. The disadvantage of this is that having read all the great novels of the world two or three times I can no longer read them with relish. There are few modern novels that excite my interest, and I do not know what I should do for relaxation were it not for the innumerable detective stories that so engagingly pass the time and once read pass straight out of one's mind. I have never cared to read books on subjects that were in no way my concern, and I still cannot bring myself to read books of entertainment or instruction about people or places that mean nothing to me. I do not want to know the history of Siam or the manners and customs of the Esquimaux. I do not want to read a life of Manzoni, and my curiosity about stout Cortez is satisfied with the fact that he stood upon a peak in Darien. I can still read with pleasure the poets that I read in my youth and with interest the poets of today. I am glad to have lived long enough to read the later

poems of Yeats and Eliot. I can read everything that pertains to Dr. Johnson and almost everything that pertains to Coleridge, Byron and Shelley. Old age robs one of the thrill one had when first one read the great master-pieces of the world; that one can never recapture. It is sad, indeed, to re-read something that at one time had made one feel like Keats's Watcher of the Skies and be forced to the conclusion that after all it's not so much. But there is one subject with which I can still occupy myself with my old excitement, and that is philosophy, not the philosophy that is disputatious and aridly technical—"Vain is the word of a Philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man"—but the philosophy that treats the problems that confront us all. Plato, Aristotle (who they say is dry, but in whom if you have a sense of humour you can find quite a lot to amuse you), Plotinus and Spinoza, with sundry moderns, among whom Bradley and Whitehead, never cease to entertain me and incite me to reflection. After all, they and the Greek tragedians deal with the only things that are important to man. They exalt and tranquillise. To read them is to sail with a gentle breeze in an inland sea studded with a thousand isles.

Ten years ago I set down haltingly in *The Summing Up* such impressions and thoughts as experience, reading and my meditations had occasioned in me concerning God, immortality and the meaning and worth of life, and I do not know that, on these matters I have since then found cause to change my mind. If I had to write it over again I should try to deal a little less superficially with the pressing

subject of values and perhaps find something less haphazard to say about intuition, a subject upon which certain philosophers have reared an imposing edifice of surmise, but which seems to me to offer as insecure a foundation for any structure more substantial than a Castle in Spain as a ping-pong ball wavering on a jet of water in a shooting-gallery.

Now that I am ten years nearer to death I look forward to it with no more apprehension than I did then. There are indeed days when I feel that I have done everything too often, known too many people, read too many books, seen too many pictures, statues, churches and fine houses, and listened to too much music. I do not know whether God exists or not. None of the arguments that have been adduced to prove His existence carries conviction, and belief must rest, as Epicurus put it long ago, on immediate apprehension. That immediate apprehension I have never had. Nor has anyone satisfactorily explained the compatibility of evil with an all-powerful and all-good God. For a while I was attracted to the Hindu conception of that mysterious neuter which is existence, knowledge and bliss, without beginning, without end and I should be more inclined to believe in that than in any other God that human wishes have devised. But I think it no more than an impressive fantasy. It is impossible logically to deduce the multiplicity of the world from the ultimate cause. When I consider the vastness of the universe, with its innumerable stars and its spaces measured by thousands upon thousands of light years, I am overwhelmed with awe, but my imagination cannot conceive a creator of it. I am willing enough to

accept the existence of the universe as an enigma the wit of man cannot hope to solve. So far as the existence of life is concerned I am not disinclined to credit the notion that there is a psycho-physical stuff in which is the germ of life and that the psychic side of this is the source of the complex business of evolution. But what the object of it all is, if any, what the meaning of it all is, if any, is as dark to me as it ever was. All I know is that nothing philosophers, theologians or mystics have said about it persuades me.

And what of the soul? The Hindus call it Atman, and they think it has existed from eternity and will continue to exist to eternity. It is easier to believe that than that it is created with the conception or birth of the individual. They think it is of the nature of Absolute Reality, and having emanated from that will at long last return to it. It is a pleasing fancy; no one can know that it is anything more. It entails the belief in transmigration, which in turn offers the only plausible explanation for the existence of evil that human ingenuity has conceived, for it supposes that evil is the retribution for past error. It does not explain why an all-wise and all-good creator should have been willing or even able to produce error.

But what is the soul? From Plato onwards many answers have been given to this question, and most of them are but modifications of his conjectures. We use the word constantly, and it must be presumed that we mean something by it. Christianity has accepted it as an article of faith that the soul is a simple spiritual substance created by God and immortal. One may not believe that and yet attach some significance to the word.

When I ask myself what I mean by it I can only answer that I mean by it my consciousness of myself, the I in me, the personality which is me, and that personality is compounded of my thoughts, my feelings, my experiences and the accidents of my body. I think many people shrink from the notion that the accidents of the body can have an effect on the constitution of the soul. There is nothing of which for my own part I am more assured. My soul would have been quite different if I had not stammered or if I had been four or five inches taller; I am slightly prognathous; in my childhood they did not know that this could be remedied by a gold band worn while the jaw is still malleable; if they had, my countenance would have borne a different cast, the reaction toward me of my fellows would have been different and therefore my disposition, my attitude to them, would have been different too. But what sort of thing is this soul that can be modified by a dental apparatus? We all know how greatly changed our lives would have been if we had not, by what seems mere chance met such and such a person or if we had not been at a particular moment at a particular place; and so our character, and so our soul, would have been other than they are.

For whether the soul is a conglomeration of qualities, affections, idiosyncrasies, I know not what, or a simple spiritual substance, character is its sensible manifestation. I suppose everyone would agree that suffering, mental or physical, has its effect on the character. I have known men who when poor and unrecognized were envious, harsh and mean, but on achieving success became kindly and magnanimous. Is it not

strange that a bit of money in the bank and a taste of fame should give them greatness of soul? Contrariwise, I have known men who were decent and honourable, in illness or penury become lying, deceitful, querulous and malevolent. I find it then impossible to believe that the soul thus contingent on the accidents of the body can exist in separation from it. When you see the dead it can hardly fail to occur to you that they do look awfully dead.

I have been asked on occasion whether I would like to live my life over again. On the whole it has been a pretty good life, perhaps better than most people's, but I should see no point in repeating it. It would be as idle as to read again a detective story that you have read before. But supposing there were such a thing as reincarnation, belief in which is explicitly held by three quarters of the human race, and one could choose whether or no one would enter upon a new life on earth, I have in the past sometimes thought that I should be willing to try the experiment on the chance that I might enjoy experiences which circumstances and my own idiosyncrasies, spiritual and corporeal, have prevented me from enjoying, and learn the many things that I have not had the time or the occasion to learn. But now I should refuse. I have had enough. I neither believe in immortality nor desire it. I should like to die quickly and painlessly, and I am content to be assured that with my last breath my soul, with its aspirations and its weaknesses, will dissolve into nothingness. I have taken to heart what Epicurus wrote to Menoeceus: "Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil consists in

sensation, but death is deprivation of sensation. And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality. For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living."

With these words and on this day I think it fitting to put an end to this book.

## NOTES

### I

#### THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Arthur Christopher Benson (1862-1925). English educationist and author. For some time he was Fellow and Lecturer at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was later appointed Professor of English Fiction at the Royal Society of Literature, London and in 1915 he became Master of Magdalene.

He wrote critical works on Rossetti, Ruskin and Walter Pater, but his chief success was gained in 1906 by *From a College Window* from which this essay has been taken. It was followed by a number of similar books of reflections which proved very popular. He says here that conversation, if developed as a fine art, can be one of the greatest sources of pleasure. The main pitfalls to be avoided are egotism and the desire to be merely witty or paradoxical. Good conversation is a sign of elegance and culture.

*Stevenson, R. L.* (1850-94), author of *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and a number of essays, poems, travel books, etc.

*Macaulay, T. B.* (*Lord*) (1800-59), historian, politician and poet. It was said that he was apt to talk as though he were addressing a public meeting, and that where he was present, nobody else could put in a word. "If any of you have got anything to say," said Samuel Rogers to his guests at breakfast one morning, "you had better say it now you have got a chance. Macaulay is coming."

*Coleridge, S. T.* (1772-1834). Not only a poet, critic and philosopher, but a great talker. He talked "as though he were engaged in an argument with space and eternity." There is "that whimsical story of Lamb cutting off

the coat-button that Coleridge held him by in the garden at Highgate, going for his day's work into the City, returning in the evening, hearing Coleridge's voice, looking over the hedge and seeing the poet with the button between forefingers and thumb still talking into space."

*keep up one's end*: acquit oneself well in conversation, bargaining, etc.

*astigmatism*: structural defect in the eye, preventing rays of light from being brought to a common focus. The effect is to blur the outline of what is looked at.

*gambit*: opening moves in a game of Chess in which a player may sacrifice one of his pieces to secure certain ends.

*points d'appui*: points of support.

*like Iphigenia decked for the sacrifice*: Iphigenia was the daughter of Agamemnon. When the Greeks on their way to the Trojan war were detained by contrary winds at Aulis, they were told that Iphigenia should be sacrificed to appease the wrath of Artemis, whose stag Agamemnon had killed. Agamemnon reluctantly agreed: but as the priest was about to strike the fatal blow, Artemis relented and carried her away, leaving a deer in her place. In the version by Euripides, however, she is sacrificed.

*Artemis*: Diana, goddess of hunting and chastity.

*tête-à-tête*: literally, head-to-head, i.e., confidential talk.

*tacenda*: things to be passed over in silence, not to be mentioned.

*penetralia*: innermost shrine or recesses.

*Dante*: (1265-1321), Italian poet, author of the *Divina Commedia* and *Vita Nuova*.

*sorrowful desolation*: which Dante experienced after the death of his Beatrice.

*deuteronagonist*: person of next importance to the protagonist or hero in a drama.

## II

## THE ATHENS OF SOCRATES AND PLATO

G. Lowes Dickinson: (1862-1932), was for a long time Fellow and Lecturer at King's College, Cambridge. A scholar, humanist and an essayist of outstanding gifts, he produced several remarkable books, one of which is *Plato and His Dialogues*. It is an introduction to the philosophy of Socrates and Plato.

*the Platonic dialogues*: The great Greek philosopher Plato embodied his views in dialogues. The principal dialogues were thirteen in number though only six of them have become famous. Socrates, Plato's teacher, figures in these dialogues and conducts the discussions.

*Athens*: the chief city of ancient Greece, and the seat of Greek culture in art, literature and democratic administration.

*Florence*: in the Middle Ages was an independent city state. Some of the most gifted Italians lived and worked there then and at all periods.

*Renaissance*: A movement in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries between the Medieval and the Modern periods. It revived classical ideals in literature, painting and architecture, and fostered the early development of science.

*Gymnasium*: in ancient Greece, the public place where Greek youth used to exercise and receive instruction. Great Greek teachers, such as Plato and Aristotle, lectured there.

*Macedonian*: The ancient Macedonian kingdom became important under Philip in the 4th century B.C., and his son Alexander the Great extended its sway over half the world.

*Weimar*: former grand-duchy of Germany, became famous as the residence of Goethé, the greatest of German poets and dramatists.

*Peloponnesian war*: The war between Athens and Sparta. It ended in the surrender of Athens and a brief transfer of leadership to Sparta.

*Pericles*: (490-429 B.C.), great Greek statesman and general and the chief architect of the glory of Athens.

*Thucydides*: Greek historian of the Peloponnesian war. The history of the war is recognised as one of the most important historical monuments of the classical world.

*Lacedaemonians*: the Spartans.

*Attica*: A country in ancient Greece, which gained worldwide fame and importance.

*Hellas*: Greece.

*Homer*: one of the greatest poets of all time, the Greek epic poet, author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

*poltroon*: a coward, a mean-spirited person.

### III

#### I BELIEVE

David Low (1891- ). Born at Dunedip, New Zealand. Celebrated cartoonist, noted for his witty treatment of political and social themes in drawings published in such important newspapers as the *Evening Standard*, the *Daily Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian*. Several collections of his cartoons have been published, e.g., *Lloyd George and Co.*, *Lions and Lambs*, *Political Parade*, *A Cartoon History of Our Times*. "Colonel Blimp," the epitome of old-fashioned Toryism, is his creation.

In the present essay, which was contributed as an article to the *New York Times*, he gives a picture of Democracy as it should be, from the point of view of a humorist.

*roysterer*: reveller.

*chump*: (slang) fool, blockhead.

*fish-eyed*: dull, vacant-looking.

*Nazism*: the National Socialist movement in Germany after the First World War, which resulted in the dictatorship of Hitler, invaded all fields of life and expression, and brought about the disastrous war of 1939-45.

*Fascism*: a similar movement in Italy which established the dictatorship of Mussolini. It did not, however, lead to such excesses as in Germany.

*Senator McCarthy*: an American Senator, notorious for his witch-hunting tactics in his campaign against Communistic influences, real or imaginary, in the United States.

• *chicanery*: legal trickery.

*Machiavelli*: (1469-1527), a Florentine statesman and political philosopher. He believed that the end justified the means, and for the purpose of establishing a united Italy he advocated methods involving cruelty and bad faith. His name is still used to represent cunning and unscrupulous principles in any walk of life.

*Marx, Karl*: (1813-83), Prussian Jew who set forth the principles of Communism in his *Das Kapital*.

*Engels, Friedrich*: (1820-95), German collaborator of Marx. It was he who edited Vols. 2 and 3 of *Das Kapital*.

*Kerensky, Alexander*: (1881- ), Russian Minister of Justice immediately after the revolution of 1917. Later he became War Minister and then Prime Minister until the Bolshevik revolution (Nov. 1917). He made a fruitless attempt to recover Russia from the Bolsheviks and then retired to Paris.

*Chiang Kai-Shek*: (1888- ), Chinese Generalissimo until the Communist revolution there: now living in Formosa as the leader of the Kuomintang or Nationalist party.

*war-lords*: rival leaders of armies like the Chinese generals of former days who did not fight for any national cause, but simply for their own power and profit.

*something...Sunday outing:* create a despotism more terrible and abominable than Stalin's dictatorship.

*two such vast areas:* Russia and China.

#### IV

#### WORLD GOVERNMENT

Bertrand Russell (1872- ). Educated at Cambridge where he won distinction in Mathematics and Philosophy. Appointed Lecturer in Trinity College: but deprived of his lectureship in 1914, because of his pacifist views. Later went to China to teach in the Peking University.

In 1931, on the death of his brother, he was raised to the peerage. He has written a number of books on Philosophy, Sociology and Education and for this he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1950. He is a believer in guild socialism and a world government.

He is a frequent speaker at the B.B.C. and the present selection was first delivered as a radio talk over the B.B.C. in September, 1954. He points out that the one remedy for the world's maladies is the establishment of a world government. Human survival in this atomic age depends on it. It is either one world—or none.

*Utopian:* too high or noble to be realized in practice; from 'Utopia,' a book written by Sir Thomas More, 1516.

*Korea:* In 1948, Russian troops withdrew from North Korea after a new Republic had been established there. American military government also ceased in South Korea, a separate Republic. In 1950 North Korea invaded her southern neighbour, and within a week Seoul, the capital, fell. An appeal was made to the United Nations and forces were sent to the aid of South Korea, mainly consisting of United States soldiers; but fighting or medical units were contributed by

sixteen other countries as well. In 1951 Russia suggested a truce, which was signed, after protracted negotiations, in July 1953.

*Malenkov, Georgi*: (b. 1901), President of the Supreme Soviet after the death of Stalin, until he was deposed by Marshal Bulganin, the present President.

*Papua*: formerly British New Guinea—the south-eastern part of New Guinea, now governed by Australia.

*Baruch plan*: Bernard Mannes Baruch (b. 1870) is a wealthy American stockbroker who became a well-known statesman. In 1946-47 he was U. S. representative on the U. N. Atomic Energy Commission. The American proposal for the control of Atomic weapons was presented by him and has come to be known as the Baruch Plan.

*The Wars of the Roses*: in the 15th century, during the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III, between the great feudal lords of York and Lancaster.

*Alexander the Great*: (356-323 B.C.), son of Philip II of Macedon.

*Sir Francis Drake*: (1540-96), English admiral and circumnavigator.

## V

### IN PRAISE OF MISTAKES

Robert Lynd (1879-1949)—an Irish writer of great charm. He became the Literary Editor of the *News Chronicle*, and also, week after week, for a number of years contributed the middle article in the *New Statesman* under the pseudonym Y.Y. He is a delightful writer with wide human sympathies, a spirit of tolerance and a subtle sense of humour. As he himself once said: "The world is crying out just now for a return of good humour. Lacking its good humour, London would be one of the most uninhabitable of cities. Who would live amid the buzz of a thousand spites?"

Sir John Squire thus summarises his impressions of Lynd: "Mr. Lynd is the sympathetic sage: the humorous and gentle observer of the heroisms, follies and hobbies of mankind... the detached critic who can see all men as small and comic, yet does not forget that he himself is as small and comic as the rest of them... He treats nominally great subjects with a tempered levity and nominally small ones with a tempered solemnity."

In the present essay, taken from his book *The Green Man*, Lynd whimsically argues that the mistakes committed by a writer give the reader a certain sense of superiority and thus add to his delight in reading. Writers who commit funny mistakes should therefore be encouraged and handsomely rewarded!

*Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith*: (now Mrs. J. P. Fry), born 1889, has written several novels about Sussex life and two studies of Jane Austen.

*from Kent... early 18th century*: this is absurd, for there were no railways or other satisfactory means of communication; and there were well-known schools nearer Kent.

*Walter Besant*: (1836-1901), novelist and historian of London.

*William Le Queux*: (1864-1927), English novelist and traveler, also wrote popular thrillers like *Secrets of Monte Carlo*, *Rasputin the Rascal Monk*, etc.

*rural dean*: a clergyman representing the bishop in a group of parishes called a rural deanery. He is *not* a Dean and his residence cannot be called a Deanery.

*C. I. D.*: Criminal Investigation Department.

*Lord Clive*: (1725-1774). In 1772 Parliament appointed a Committee to enquire into some allegations about his conduct in India. When questioned by this Committee, he said: "Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey placed me. A great province was dependent on my pleasure: an opulent city lay

at my mercy: its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles. I walked through vaults... piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman," cried he, warming to his subject and striking his hand against his brow, "this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation."

*Tailor and Cutter*: a London trade journal which has an annual article on the representation of men's clothes in the portraits shown at the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.

*Augustus John*: (1879- ). One of the most brilliant of modern British painters, a supporter of the reaction against impressionism. Painted G. B. Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Lloyd George, etc.

*Sir William Orpen*: (1878-1931), Irish portrait and landscape painter.

*Froude, James Anthony*: (1818-94), author of *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Armada*, which has been criticized for its inaccuracies and prolixity.

*Shakespeare blundered in chronology and geography*: e.g., the reference to the striking clock in *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 192, or Cleopatra calling for ink and paper in *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. 4, 63.

*Lamb and Hazlitt* are well known for the profuse but often inaccurate quotations in their writings. Here is an amusing story about it, given by Lamb himself. "I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired and quoted in a book as a proof of the stupendous power of that poet: but no such lines are to be found... I must have dreamed them!"

*a famous novelist*: This blunder is often attributed to Ouida (Marie Louise De La Ramée: 1839-1908). She wrote forty-five novels dealing with fashionable life and containing amusing mistakes in matters of men's sports and occupations. It has never been proved, however, that she was guilty of this one.

*stroke*: oarsman rowing nearest the stern and setting the time of the stroke. The oarsmen, of course, have to row in unison and it is absurd to speak of any of them, especially the stroke, as rowing faster than others.

*picked up...try*: This is done in Rugby and not in Association Football.

*Johnson's mistakes*: e.g., in the dictionary the word "pastern" is defined as the knee of a horse, whereas it actually means that part of the foot between fetlock and hoof. When questioned by a lady how he came to commit such an error, Johnson made the devastating reply "Ignorance, Madam—pure ignorance."

*the time of Othello*: C. 1570.

*eureka*: (more properly *heureka*), a Greek word meaning "I have found it." When Archimedes (287-212 B.C.) discovered the means of testing whether or not base metal had been introduced into Hiero's crown, he leapt out of his bath and rushed naked into the street crying 'Eureka.'

*making the female birds sing*, e.g.,

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,  
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain.

*Adonais*: St. 17, ll. 1-2.

*the source of a misprint is never given*: This is no longer true. Punch has reverted to giving the sources.

*The boy stood on the burning deck*: the opening line of "Casanova" by Mrs. Hemans (1793-1835).

*Darius*: King of Persia (521-485 B.C.).

*Xerxes*: son of Darius, ruled from 485 to 465 B.C.

*William the Conqueror*: 1027-1087.

*Battle of Hastings*: 1066. The Normans under William defeated the English, under Harold, in this decisive battle.

*William of Orange*: became William III of England (1650-1702).

## VI

## SCIENCE

Sir Richard Livingstone (1880- ), sometime Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. A distinguished educationist, and a classical scholar, he has written many books on both these subjects. Here he tells us that we live in an age of Science, and therefore we cannot remain oblivious of the advantages which Science has conferred on us. It has revolutionised our lives, and has made the world a smaller place than it was before. It has also created many difficult problems. What these are and how we should meet some of them are the questions discussed in this essay.

*liberalism*: in politics stands for an attitude of mind which shows sympathy with new ideas and methods and with democratic institutions.

*rationalism*: Doctrine that reason is the principal, if not the only, source of certain knowledge.

*internal combustion engine*: a distinguishing feature of the engine is that the energy to produce motion is developed in the engine cylinder itself.

*The Argentine*: A South American republic with Buenos Aires as its capital.

*Antipodes*: region lying on the opposite side of the globe from any given point.

*Stanley Baldwin*: (1867-1947), was three times Conservative Prime Minister of England.

*The Rhine*: a river which flows through Germany and Holland.

*caelum...currunt*: a line from Horace: "The sky and not their soul, they change who cross the sea."

*embarras de richesse*: embarrassment of riches, more wealth than we know how to handle.

*nouveaux riches*: the newly rich.

*the blue Caribbean*: the part of the Atlantic enclosed by the West Indies and South America.

*Gothic window*: a window in Gothic style, with pointed arches and symbolic decorations consisting of birds, beasts and human figures.

*William Morris* and *John Ruskin*: 19th century English writers, were both lovers of art. Ruskin (1819-1900) was an essayist and art critic also, and gave expression to his economic and social theories in rich English prose. William Morris (1834-96) was Ruskin's disciple. He was a poet, printer and designer and maker of beautiful furniture and tapestry, painter, as well as an ardent social reformer.

*Babylon*: capital of the ancient Babylonia, and one of the richest and most magnificent cities of the East.

*Book of Genesis*: the first book of the Bible.

*Thomas Hardy*: (1840-1928), English novelist and poet, famous for his stories of 'Wessex,' the south-west of England.

*peripheral*: pertaining to the outer surface or circumference.

*kulturgeschichte*: 'history of culture.'

*Gordian knot*: baffling difficulty.

*until action...doubts and difficulties*: cf. Hamlet III. i. 84-88.  
"thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn away  
And lose the name of action."

*Edmund Burke*: (1729-1797), English statesman, born in Ireland, a magnificent orator.

*Homer*: ancient Greek poet to whom is assigned the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

*Dante*: (1265-1321), the foremost Italian poet, author of the *Divine Comedy*.

*Beethoven*: (1770-1827), famous German composer.

*Parthenon*, the great Athenian temple built about 450 B.C. and dedicated to Athene.

*Sistine Chapel*: the Pope's private chapel in the Vatican at Rome, contains some famous paintings and frescoes.

*Whitehead, Professor Alfred North*: (1861-1947), a distinguished English scientist and philosopher.

## VII

### CULTURE AND NATURE

John Cowper Powys (1872- ) is an English novelist and critic. A native of Dorset, his writings are marked by a strong love of nature. According to him, one should become absorbed in nature, not necessarily in her external beauty but in her true self, and should love her for what she is, the dark side as well as the bright.

*psychic*: connected with the soul or spirit.

*nostalgia*: home-sickness, or intense longing for something past or remote that was once loved.

*contours*: The outline of a surface.

*primeval*: Belonging to the early ages of the world; prehistoric.

*motifs*: themes or ideas predominating in an artistic or literary composition.

*miasmic*: infectious, like some harmful vapour.

*secretive piety*: love, reverence and understanding which is reserved and reticent.

'That bind our years together . . . secretive piety': reminiscent of Wordsworth's "The Rainbow":—

The Child is father of the Man:

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each, by natural piety.

"thoughts . . . too deep for tears": the last line of Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

## VIII

### THE GANDHIAN WAY

C. E. M. Joad (1891-1953), an English thinker and writer of a philosophic bent of mind, who wrote in a very stimulating manner on some of the problems of recent times. He wrote this essay for the volume presented to Mahatma Gandhi on his seventieth birthday, October 2nd, 1939. In a clear, concise manner, Joad describes the characteristic Gandhian approach to the problems of the world, and incidentally tells us the secret of Gandhiji's greatness. The essay is valuable as an indication of how a western thinker looked at Gandhiji.

*Aristotle*: (384-322 B.C.), the most famous of the Greek philosophers, was a disciple of Plato. He established the Lyceum at Athens and formed a school of philosophy.

*nitwits*: (U. S. slang) blockheads.

*Heterodoxy*: deviation from established doctrines or accepted opinions, the opposite of orthodoxy.

*Socrates*: (469-399 B.C.), the distinguished Greek philosopher and one of the wisest men who ever lived. He was charged with impiety and corruption of the Athenian youth and was sentenced to death.

*Giordano Bruno*: (1548-1600), Italian philosopher; an original thinker who was burned as a heretic.

*Michael Servetus*: (1511-1553), physician and theologian. He was persecuted for his opinions and was put to death.

*Shelley*: (1792-1822), English romantic poet. The quotation is from paragraph four of his critical treatise *A Defence of Poetry* where he describes the prophetic function of poetry.

*evolutionary 'sport'*: animal or plant, deviating suddenly or strikingly from the normal type, and thus causing evolution of new types.

## IX

## ICHABOD

Max Beerbohm (1872- ), was born in London and educated at Charterhouse and Merton College, Oxford. He is a critic, essayist, parodist and caricaturist—a master of wit, irony and satire. His important volumes of essays are his *Works* (published when he was twenty-four) *More, And Even Now* and *Yet Again*. He has a polished, incisive and elaborate style and his essays may be called 'pure essays', making no great attempt at edification.

His collection of prose parodies *A Christmas Garland*, makes delightful reading. In it he parodies such writers as Wells, Bennet, Conrad and Chesterton. His stories *Zuleika Dobson* and *Seven Men* contain satirical pictures of contemporary life at Oxford and London.

Admirable as he is as a writer, he is equally good with his brush and pencil. His *Fifty Caricatures* show his lively dexterity in the art of good-natured if distinctly pungent ridicule.

For many years past he has made his home in Italy. In 'Ichabod' he first describes a hat-box, which with its various labels, was for him a record of all his wanderings, and then recounts some of his pleasant experiences during his travels—all this in his own graceful and inimitable style.

*Ichabod*: a Hebrew word meaning "The glory is departed".  
See I Samuel IV. 21.

*in the shadow of a tower . . . nothing*: The hat-box, divested of its labels, is as prosaic as a bleak tower without a mantle of ivy. Like a purely ornamental urn, it commemorates nothing.

*cri de coeur*: cry of the heart.

*which Mr. Beamish...Chloe's grave*: The reference is to *The Tale of Chloe*, a short novel written by George

Meredith. Mr. Beamish is Beau Beamish, the King of Bath. Chloe is an innocent maiden in love with a villain named Caseldy, who, however, tries to seduce Susan, Chloe's friend. Chloe at last prevents their midnight elopement by hanging herself on the door through which Susan and Caseldy have to pass. Beau Beamish wrote a touching epitaph over the grave of Chloe.

*Orchids...scarabei*: some of the beautiful or rare things which collectors are fond of.

*majolica*: ornamental Italian ware.

*mezzotints*: engravings on metal plates.

*cameos*: pieces of relief carving in precious stone (sardonyx, agate, etc.).

*scarabei*: ancient Egyptian gems cut in the form of beetles.

*Nimrod*: 'a mighty hunter' mentioned in Genesis X. 9.

*Lothario*: a heartless profligate in *The Fair Penitents* (1703), a drama by Nicholas Rowe: a synonym for a lady-killer.

*veneries*: hunting exploits.

*Nomady*: wandering (coined from 'nomad').

*King's Messenger*: officer carrying confidential documents on Government service.

*En Voiture*: (French) Get in: take your seats, please.

*Partenza*: (Italian) departure.

*one sweep of a pastebrush*: the act of pasting the Paris label on his boxes.

*Strange that the porter.....V'la, M'sieu*: because in imagination he is already in Paris and expects to see a French porter and hear French words.

*V'la, M'sieu*: Here you are, sir.

*corduroyed magician*: the London porter who pasted the Paris label on his box.

*blue-bloused throng*: French porters in blue uniform.

*the people...Charing Cross*: his fellow passengers who started with him from the Charing Cross station in London. But all that seems years ago now!

*coupé*: half compartment at the end of a railway carriage.

*Chemins de Fer de l'Ouest*: Western Railway.

*antimacassars*: covering thrown over chairs, etc., as protection from grease (macassar oil), or as an ornament.

*jalousies*: shutters.

*Bloomsbury*: N. W. district of London.

*liefer*: (archaic) more gladly.

*Endymion*: a beautiful shepherd of whom Diana became enamoured, when she saw him sleeping on Mt. Latmos. She caused him to sleep for ever so that she might always enjoy his beauty.

*forty modern thieves*: a reference to "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." The captain of the Forty Thieves brought his men concealed in leather oil-jars to the house of Ali Baba, intending to kill him at night. But he was defeated in his purpose by Morgiana, Ali Baba's faithful maid servant, who destroyed the thieves with boiling oil and finally killed the captain himself.

*hieroglyphics*: secret symbols, resembling the ancient hieroglyphics, chalked on the boxes by the Customs officials.

*Sandy Hook*: a promontory at the mouth of New York Bay.

*Odyssey*: the epic record of his travels, just as the *Odyssey* is Homer's account of the wanderings of Odysseus.

*Ithacan*: Odysseus was king of the little island of Ithaca.

*the Hotel Circe*: During his wanderings Odysseus visited Æaea, the land of the sorceress Circe, and stayed with her for a year.

*the Hotel Calypso*: Calypso was a nymph who reigned in the island of Ogygia. When Odysseus was shipwrecked on her shores, Calypso offered him immortality, if he would remain with her. However, he stayed there only seven years and then returned to Ithaca.

*martinet*: strict disciplinarian or strict observer of rules (from the name of a famous drill-sergeant in the army of Louis XIV of France).

*the nouveau riche*: the newly rich: mushroom millionaires.

*trafficking . . . Heralds*: The College of Heralds grants armorial bearings to those who can afford to pay for them.

*patience*: game of cards, usually for one.

*eclectic*: one who picks up things here and there without concentrating on a definite object.

*gallimaufry*: medley.

*Imperial Statesman . . . downfall*: Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902), a great empire-builder, was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896, when he had to resign because of a political scandal. But this downfall marked only the beginning of another great achievement, namely, the building up of a new British Colony in what is now called, after him, Rhodesia.

## X

### BASIC WISDOM

This is a Convocation address delivered by Jawaharlal Nehru at the University of Ceylon, Colombo, January 12th, 1950. A wise and sagacious statesman, well-informed about world affairs, in which he has taken a distinguished part, Jawaharlal Nehru here invites attention to facts which are often forgotten. What he says here is of fundamental importance to a correct understanding of world affairs. A great lover of peace, in the cause of which he has worked as few statesmen have done, he makes a plea in this speech for a peaceful and less dogmatic approach to world affairs. If the people of the world would adopt a sane, balanced and sensible attitude, the world would become a happier place to live in, free from fear and rivalry. The Universities should teach this basic wisdom to their students.

*dogma*: opinion which must be accepted as true by members of a certain church or other organisation; belief held firmly and with tenacity by those who believe it.

*humanist*: a person concerned with human affairs and interests and the mind of man, rather than the external world of nature.

*integrated view*: opinion formed after considering a problem as a whole.

*dynamism*: force, energy. Dynamism is a theory which explains the phenomena of the Universe by the action of force alone.

*quiescent*: inactive, quiet, in a state of repose.

*grooves*: fixed habits of thought and conduct.

## XI

### THE ART OF LIVING

Lord Chatfield (1873- ). He had a highly distinguished career in the Navy and rose to be the Admiral of the Fleet. He has written on naval questions and in the autobiographical vein. This essay is in his best manner and shows the fine character training which the Navy affords. But what he writes is not only applicable to the Navy, but to the life of a young man wherever he may be placed. Lord Chatfield says, "The 'Ship' is where you are, where you work, and your shipmates stand around you, those who work with you for a common purpose."

*hammock*: Bed made from a long narrow piece of canvas, loosely stretched and swung by cords at ends from beams on ships, or from trees in gardens.

*bunk*: a sleeping berth in a ship.

*Monte Carlo*: a popular and beautiful resort in the principality of Monaco, overlooking the Mediterranean. Gamblers frequent its splendid Casino.

*Admiral Beatty*: (1871-1936), Admiral of the Fleet, fought the battle of Jutland against the Germans in 1916.

*took the tide at the flood*: cf. Shakespeare

There is a tide in the affairs of men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

*Julius Cæsar*. IV. iii. 218-219.

*Nelson*: (1758-1805), the great English Naval Commander. He won the famous battle of Trafalgar in which the French fleet was destroyed, but Nelson was killed.

*Nile*: battle of the Nile, fought in 1798 between the English and the French fleets. Nelson destroyed Napoleon's fleet.

*Trafalgar*: the battle of Trafalgar was fought in 1805, between the British under Nelson and the French and Spanish. It was a decisive victory for the British.

*Spartan*: austere, hardy. The Spartans were noted for the hardihood, endurance and simplicity of their lives.

*mens sana in corpore sano*: (Latin) a sound mind in a sound body.

## XII

### ON GROWING OLD

William Somerset Maugham (1874- ) was left an orphan at the age of ten, and was brought up by a childless uncle. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and then studied medicine, but did not practise as a physician. During the First World War, he worked for the Red Cross, and later in the British Intelligence Department. He has travelled extensively, especially in the East.

He is one of the foremost novelists of our time. His more famous novels are *Of Human Bondage*, *The Moon*

*and Suspense*, and *Cakes and Ale*. He has also written several very successful plays and numerous short stories. In 1884, when he was 60, he wrote *The Summing Up*, his autobiography: and at the age of 70, he published *A Writer's Notebook* from which this extract has been taken.

In this passage he appears in a quiet, meditative mood, "like one whom reveries numb". He knows the art of growing old gracefully. He looks back at his long-past youth, sometimes with regret, but mostly with satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment. Though he has no deep religious faith, he is not afraid of death and awaits his end calmly with a spirit of resignation. His style is simple and unadorned and yet vivid and extremely effective.

*made my final bow on the stage*: i.e., wrote my last play. Literally, it refers to the custom of the author appearing on the stage and receiving the applause of the audience at the first performance of a play. But this Maugham refused to do.

*dismiss the work of....old age*: e.g., the later poems of Wordsworth.

*Cardan, Jerome*: (1501-76), a famous Italian mathematician and writer on medicine and occult sciences.

*Manzoni, Alessandro*: (1785-1873), Italian dramatist and novelist, renowned as the author of the novel *I Promessi Sposi*, praised by Sir Walter Scott as "the best ever written."

*Cortez* (1485-1547), the Spanish conqueror of Mexico (1519).

*stood....Darien*: a reference to Keats's sonnet "On first looking into Chapman's Homer," wherein he refers to Cortez as the first of all Europeans to stand upon a peak in Darien and gaze upon the Pacific, speechless with astonishment. This, however, is inaccurate, for it was not Cortez but Balboa, his companion, who, in 1513, discovered the Pacific: nor was Balboa silent then, for he exclaimed "Hombre! (Man!)"

*Yeats, W. B.*: (1865-1939), Irish poet and playwright.

*Eliot, T. S.*: (1888- ), American by birth, English by domicile, one of the foremost poets of the day. His early poems are full of modernist experimentation, but his later ones are more lucid and less unconventional.

*Watcher of the Skies*: another phrase from Keats's sonnet "On first looking into Chapman's Homer."

*Plato*: (427-348 B.C.), Athenian philosopher, pupil of Socrates, and author of the famous *Dialogues*.

*Aristotle*: (384-322 B.C.), great Greek philosopher, Plato's pupil and tutor to Alexander the Great.

*Plotinus*: (A.D. 203-262), a philosopher who first studied at Alexandria and later opened a school in Rome. A mystic and the chief exponent of Neo-Platonism which greatly influenced early Christian thought.

*Spinoza*: (1632-77), Dutch philosopher, by origin a Portuguese Jew. In his works he expounded the doctrine of pantheism—God is everything, and everything is God.

*Bradley, F. H.*: (1846-1924), distinguished English philosopher, author of *Appearance and Reality*, *Truth and Reality*, etc.

*Whitehead, Alfred North*: (1861-1947), eminent English philosopher; educated at Cambridge, he was Lecturer in Mathematics at Trinity and later Professor of Philosophy at Harvard; author of *Science and the Modern World, Symbolism*, etc.

*the Greek tragedians*: the chief are *Aeschylus* (525-456 B.C.), *Sophocles* (496-406 B.C.) and *Euripides* (480-406 B.C.).

*Epicurus*: (341-270 B.C.), Athenian philosopher who considered the absence of pain or the repose of the mind to be the greatest good, and virtue as the only means of achieving it.

*transmigration*: belief that the soul of a person or animal at death enters into a new body of the same or a different species.

*prognathus*: with projecting jaws.

*died easily and painlessly*: cf. Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale."

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain."

This book bears the authority  
of Divakar Mishra  
vill. Keotalia P.O. Amarpur  
Digit. Saran  
Chopra



Diwaker Mishra

B. A final

Ketaki & P. S. J.



